



Collage: "Gone to Croatan" by James Koshnina

**C.A.L. Press**  
POB 1446  
Columbia, MO 65205-1446  
U.S.A.

Towards a Society based on Mutual Aid, Voluntary Cooperation & the Liberation of Desire

#45/Spring-Summer '98  
Vol.16, No.1

\$4.95

# Anarchy

**A Journal of Desire Armed**

**Raoul Vaneigem**  
The Interworld &  
the New Innocence

**Brian Morris**  
Anthropology & Anarchy

**John Zerzan**  
Reification:  
That Thing We Do

A Confession to  
Comrade Bookchin

Hip Hop as Opium

Everyday Life in  
the Spanish Revolution



Maryjude Washburn



## It's a New World

**O**ver the course of the past ten years or so the anarchist milieu has been rife with attack and counter-attack, both defamation of character and of sexual prowess. Not that this is anything new. Since well before Bakunin lambasted Marx for being an authoritarian Prussian, there has been a high level of infighting, back-biting and mud-slinging amongst radicals of all types. This isn't necessarily unhealthy, since sometimes nothing clears the air like a good split (to borrow a famous dictum of Bordiga's). What is surprising, however, is where some of this sound and fury is originating. One expects abuse from powerless, frustrated activists and armchair theorists who have nothing better to do. What is surprising to us right now is that even fairly respected, major theorists and activists have joined the fray with passion. Does this reflect something of the current state of frustration and confusion in the insurrectionary milieu?



A number of things have changed over the last three or four years that haven't been firmly placed in context. Anarchists, who once attempted to forge a third way between capitalism and communism, now find themselves in the unenviable position of being virtually the sole opposition to the global hegemony of capital. Puny in number, relatively bereft of resources, and almost hopelessly outmaneuvered by capital, are anarchists turning on each other to escape facing more crushing responsibilities?

The development of spectacular domination is an accomplished fact. The internet, technology careening out of control, and a working class that thinks its a middle class are symptomatic of just how far and fast capital has been able to extend its control over the human animal. Not only in the industrialized and post-industrial world, but also in developing countries the triumph of capital has been realized and reaffirmed. The anarchist milieu has been split between those who want to resist and those who want to embrace spectacular media and technological advances in production.

With this has also come the end of the traditional working class, at least as regards national boundaries. The fifty year old dream of having low paid workers in other countries assembling cars and radios and toys has been realized, leaving the US with a singularly service-oriented economy based on the rapid production and distribution of ultimately worthless information and cultural commodities. GATT and NAFTA, have facilitated the flight of blue collar jobs into Mexico, Guatemala, the Philippines, etc. In twenty years Mexico may well be moving these jobs further south as its own working class becomes service-ized. Right now, these countries have become the focus of capitalist plunder as their economies and cultures move rapidly toward the spectacular phase of capital's development. Significantly, their populations wait with bated breath as the juggernaut pushes their

levels of commodity consumption higher and higher. And yet, a significant number of anarchists still fantasize about organizing the working classes into syndicalist unions, still fantasize about proletarian revolution, and still fantasize about rationalizing capitalist production in ways which demand the same integration of workers into the commodity exchange nexus that capital has already been preparing.

The end of any substantial meaning to value under capital, an outcome Camatte has been predicting for decades, has been accomplished. Without any significant general equivalent, not gold, not paper, but simple value as expressed in the movement of thousands of bits of information—the flow of electrons to and fro around the globe, it's impossible for anyone to log who owns what, when, or where. To say that capital has broken free of the law of value is to misread the current situation. The only real question left is whether value exists at all, or whether it is simply numbers in a vast game of virtual monopoly? Is this vanishing of value reflected in a parallel trend towards a vanishing of critique? Where, is the insightful, brilliant and slashing discussion that lays bare this insanity once and for all. Where is the critique that can inspire authentic opposition from the operators of the global machine?

In this context how can anarchists become more effective? By accusing radical rivals of harboring fascist, racist or sexist sympathies? By inventing more complex theoretical systems, which only the originators can ever hope to master? By calling for a return to some sort of imagined anarcho-fundamentalism that only exists in the books of historians who never knew—nor could understand—the fertile creativity of anarchic movements? Or by searching out ever more disgusting terms of denunciation and abuse to use against those who disagree?

Or could it ever make just a little more sense to give people with other perspectives the benefit of the doubt for a change, to present our own ideas in honest contrast to others? Personal attack, rumor and innuendo all have their place, not, however, within our milieu and not among our comrades. There is a time for aggressive, unrelenting contestation within the limits of theoretical discussion. There are points upon which none of us will ever all agree. (We certainly don't want anyone to agree with everything we write or present in the pages of *Anarchy*.) But save the personal, scathing abuse for those who defend and apologize for the system we are seeking to destroy.

After the fall of Eurocommunism, with the continuing triumph of capital on a global scale, anarchists are the only oppositional milieu left standing. It's going to take serious investigation, criticism and creative modes of contestation to spark an effective, global response. Trash talk won't do it.

Jason McQuinn & Paul Z. Simons, Editors

# Discontents



## Essays

- 31 The Interworld  
and the New Innocence  
By RAOU L VANEIGEM

- 35 Anthropology and  
Anarchism  
By BRIAN MORRIS

- 44 Anarchist Culture:  
Everyday Life in the  
Spanish Revolution  
INTERVIEW WITH MANOLO GONZALEZ

- 53 That Thing We Do  
By JOHN ZERZAN

- 58 Description of a Struggle  
By MAX CAFARD

- 60 Confession to Comrade  
Murray Bookchin  
By C.

## Departments

### Openers

- 2 It's a New World  
5 *Anarchy* Notes

### The Sad Truth

- 8 Cornelius Castoriadis: An Obituary  
9 GANDALF Defendants Convicted

### Alternative Media Review

- 10 Alternative Press Review  
12 *The Religion of Technology*  
14 *The Last Chance to Save Capitalism*  
15 *The Secret Army, Temp Slave! & Book of Levelling*  
16 *Grand National Holiday*  
19 *Beyond Bookchin & Pirate Radio Operations*  
20 *Anarchy after Leftism: Two Reviews*  
23 *Reinventing Anarchy, Again & The Friends of Durruti Group*  
24 *Ecofascism, Hystories & At Dusk*  
25 *Workers' Control & New World Order*  
26 Anarchist Press Review

### International Anarchist News

- 28 Bill Gates gets a Pie in the Face

### Columns

- 64 Hip Hop as Opium  
by John Zerzan

### 66-81 Letters

## Anarchy #45 Spring/Summer 1998

Press run: 5,000  
ISSN 1044-1387  
LC 88-13329  
OCLC 11733794  
Printed in USA

PUBLISHED BY  
C.A.L. Press

EDITORS  
Jason McQuinn  
Paul Z. Simons

### CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS

Freddie Baer, San Francisco, CA.  
Mr. Fish, Ardmore, PA  
Johann Humyn Being, San Francisco, CA.  
James Koehnline, Seattle, WA.  
Phillip Lollar, San Francisco, CA.  
Mark Neville, Fremont, CA.  
Winston Smith, San Francisco, CA.

### CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Stephen Englander, New York  
Manolo Gonzalez, San Francisco, CA.  
Doug Imrie, Montréal, Québec  
Neal Keating, Albany, NY.  
David Mandl, New York  
Alex Trotter, New York  
Michael William, Montréal, Québec  
John Zerzan, Eugene, OR.

### CONTRIBUTORS THIS ISSUE:

Laure Akai • Bob Black • Clay Butler •  
C. • Max Cafard • CDoC • Derf • John  
Filiss • Hugues Henry • Lawrence Jarach  
• Brian Morris • Ted Rall • Unpack •  
VanZanten • Raoul Vaneigem • N.W.

And special thanks to A. Hacker  
for software assistance.

The views expressed in the articles,  
graphics, letters, etc. published in *Anarchy*  
do not necessarily reflect the views of  
C.A.L., or the editorial & production staff.

Anticopyright—*Anarchy* may be reprinted  
at will for non-profit purposes, except in  
the case of individual articles, graphics and  
other contributions copyrighted by their  
creators or previous publishers. *Anarchy* is  
indexed in the *Alternative Press Index*.

C.A.L. Press  
POB 1446  
Columbia, MO 65205-1446  
USA.

Email: jmcquinn@mail.coin.missouri.edu

"The whirligig of time has its revenges."  
—B.A.G. Fuller



## Cornelius Castoriadis: An Obituary

**T** Cornelius Castoriadis, who has died at the age of 75, was one of the most impressive and influential intellectuals on the French left, travelling over half a century from Stalinism through Trotskyism and Leninism and finally past Marxism itself, away from prevailing forms of socialism towards a more autonomous and libertarian approach to politics altogether. He was best known to English-speaking anarchists as the ideological inspiration of the [London] Solidarity group during the 1960s and 1970s.

Kornelios Kastoriades was born on 11th March 1922 to a francophile Greek family in Istanbul which soon moved to Greece, and he grew up in Athens where he studied law, economics and philosophy. He was drawn to left-wing politics as a boy and joined the Young Communists in 1937 and the Communist Party in 1941, but he soon turned against the party line and joined an extreme Trotskyist faction in 1942. He was also involved in the resistance movement against the German occupation of Greece. He ran into personal danger from enemies on either side, and in 1945 he made his way to France, where he spent the rest of his life.

By profession he was a statistical economist, and from 1948 he worked as a senior official at the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) in Paris. But by vocation he was a revolutionary propagandist, and during the same period he wrote prolifically for left-wing publications and held regular meetings in Paris. In 1946 he joined the French section of the Trotskyist Fourth International, the Parti Communiste Internationaliste, but he formed a dissident faction which left it in 1948. He became a founding editor of the paper *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, which from 1949 acted as the focus of one of the most active groupuscules of the New Left, campaigning against all actually existing forms of socialism, whether reformist or revolutionary, and for a new form of socialism which would bring real liberty, equality and fraternity. As "Pierre Chaulieu" or "Paul Cardan" or "Jean-Marc Coudray," he produced a series of essays which appeared as articles and then as pamphlets, were translated into several languages, and reached small but active groups in other countries.

In England his influence was exerted through the Solidarity group, founded in 1960 which attempted to play a similar part in the British left (and whose main leader coincidentally came from a Greek family and used various pseudonyms). During a period of more than twenty years, conscientious translations of the writings of 'Paul Cardan'

(often improved versions of the originals) appeared as articles in *Solidarity* magazine or as Solidarity pamphlets or books, and introduced his ideas to the English-speaking world—and beyond, since they were widely read not only in Britain and America but in many parts of both Western and Eastern Europe. Revolutionary and libertarian socialists of all kinds in all places were impressed by such texts as *Socialism Reaffirmed*, *Socialism or Barbarism*, *The Meaning of Socialism*, *The Crisis of Modern Society*, *Modern Capitalism and Revolution*, *History as Revolution*, *Redefining Revolution*, *History as Creation*, and were stimulated to rethink their ideas.

His key doctrines were that class society is divided not according to the ownership or control of property but according to the possession or exertion of power (essentially between order-givers or directors and executants or order-takers), that the various attempts at political and social revolution (especially by Communist Parties) have succeeded only in replacing the old bureaucracies by new ones, that Marxist analysis itself shows that all the varieties of Marxism (including that of Marx himself) cannot succeed, and that other ways must be found for individuals to take power over their own lives, based on the principles of autogestion, self-management and autonomy.

His influence was most obvious in the "events" of 1968 in France, many of whose leaders—especially Daniel Cohn-Bendit—were impressed by his critical approach to all old politics, though as it happened the *Socialisme ou Barbarie* paper and group had ceased a couple of years earlier. In particular his concept of autogestion had a wide appeal for the rebels outside the established political parties. Eventually he abandoned not only Marxism but socialism, and by the end of the 1970s he adopted the term "autonomous society" instead. His line clearly converged with that of anarchism, but although he made occasional references to the anarchists, like many former Marxists he had little respect for them, and in return anarchists took little notice of him. This was probably a mistake, since many of his positive as well as negative ideas are highly relevant to the work facing the anarchist movement in the contemporary world.

In 1970 he retired from the OECD and became a French citizen. He turned to psychology and became a psychoanalyst in 1974, associated with the "Fourth Group" of dissident Lacanians. He began to achieve recognition as a leading intellectual, was an editor of two leading magazines, *Textures* (1971-

1975) and *Libre* (1976-1980), and in 1980 he became a director of studies at École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales at the University of Paris. He conducted an ambitious program of work and, at last able to write freely under his own name, he produced a score of books. A series of cheap collections of his early writings appeared from 1973 to 1979, accompanied by *L'Institution imaginaire de la société* in 1975, and followed by a series of collections of later writings under the general title *Carrefours dans la labyrinthe* from 1978 to 1997.

At the same time he became better known in the English-speaking world with the appearance of American translations of some of his writings: *Crossroads in the Labyrinth* (1984), *The Imaginary Institution of Society* (1987), a three-volume collection of *Political and Social Writings* (1988-1993), an anthology of *Philosophy, Politics, Autonomy* (1991), *World in Fragments* (1997), and another anthology, *The Castoriadis Reader* (1997), just before his death. But he was still virtually ignored by the political and intellectual establishments in the English-speaking world.

Towards the end of his life he turned increasingly to linguistics and mathematics, ancient history and pure philosophy. He developed an idiosyncratic humanist position which emphasized the part played by individual imagination and creative culture in human affairs and which included a remarkable "ethic of mortality," arguing that the absence of any kind of divinity above humanity and of any kind of existence after death made it all the more important to accept a tragic sense of both private and public life and to concentrate on the development of autonomous individuals in an autonomous society here and now. He always opposed all kinds of intellectual obscurantism, though he never escaped the obscurity of modern discourse in French, and his style became increasingly esoteric and neologistic. At his worst he might be arrogant and abstract, but at his best he could be inspiring and realistic. He always had a wide circle of friends, to whom he was known as "Cornelle" and with whom he enjoyed furious arguments, and he also earned increasing respect from a larger public. He will probably be remembered for his negative work, which helped to destroy some of the most harmful myths of our time, rather than for his positive work, which tried to construct a new world in their place; yet now that the former task is completed, the latter task becomes increasingly urgent. "Whatever happens," he said at the end of his life, "I shall remain first and foremost a

## GAndALF Defendants Convicted

**O**n Thursday, November 13, the GAndALF trial ("GAndALF" is an acronym derived from the organization names of the accused, Green Anarchist and the Animal Liberation Front) resulted in three editors of *Green Anarchist* magazine—Steve Booth, Saxon Burchall-Wood and Noel Molland—each being sentenced to 3 years imprisonment. The state had brought charges against the editors of *Green Anarchist* and supporters of the ALF for "conspiracy to incite persons unknown to commit criminal damage." One ALFSG newsletter editor was found "not guilty" and other defendants will be tried at a later date. All those convicted are preparing for appeals.

The three convicted defendants had published news of a wide range of current direct actions (in the UK and other countries around the world) by a wide range of militant activists. The court decided this was "incitement." This means that simply reporting direct action news and discussing political questions around it have now been declared crimes, punishable by up to ten years imprisonment in the UK. Passing sentence after the 12-week trial at Portsmouth Crown Court, Judge David Selwood claimed, "Those who incite such actions and who hope such actions will increase and proliferate are, at least in my view, as guilty as those who take part in violent direct action." Judge Selwood went on to call the three

convicted defendants "terrorists."

Freedom of expression and association are never guaranteed, despite the illusions encouraged by toothless documents like the UN Charter (or the somewhat more respected Bill of Rights in the US), and the way the conspiracy/incitement laws have been used in the GAndALF case demonstrate how easily these freedoms can be violated in the UK.

In the wake of the trial *Green Anarchist* continues to publish as usual. Over seventy representatives of the alternative press issued a statement in September in support of *Green Anarchist*, and forty alternative publications have carried statements condemning the GAndALF prosecution. The September statement of solidarity which has since been signed by over 300 publications (including this magazine) and individuals points out that, "Without a fearless and free press there can be no informed discussion and participation in public life...it is not the reporting of direct action which incites further direct action; environmental degradation, animal abuse, economic injustice, attacks on freedom, weapons exports, nuclear weapons, lack of democratic process—these, among many others, are the inciting factors." It also declares, "It is vital that the press unite to defend the basic freedoms under attack in this case. It is not for the police to determine the limits of our discussions."

A public organizing meeting has been

called by the McLibel Support Campaign and London Greenpeace for all those who wish to help defend and support the independent radical press, to encourage successful and widespread defiance of state censorship and persecution, and to free the convicted GAndALF 3. The GAndALF 3 need your letters and support. Write to: Steve Booth CK4323, Saxon Burchall-Wood CK4322 and Noel Molland CK 4321 at: HMP Winchester, Romsey Road SO22 5DF, England.

## Are Dead Children Worth the Price?

"We have heard that a half million children have died," said *60 Minutes* reporter Lesley Stahl, speaking of US sanctions against Iraq. "I mean, that's more children than died in Hiroshima. And—and you know, is the price worth it?"

Her guest, in May 1996, U.N. Ambassador Madeleine Albright, responded: "I think this is a very hard choice, but the price—we think the price is worth it."

—Los Angeles Times

## Castoriadis

Continued from previous page

revolutionary." Other revolutionaries still have much to learn from him.

Cornelius Castoriadis died in Paris following a heart operation on 26th December 1997, and was the subject of long obituaries in the French press. Obituaries appeared in England in *The Guardian* and *The Times* (the latter being an abridged and expurgated version of the present article).

—NW

Reprinted from: *Freedom, Freedom Press*, 84B Whitechapel High Street, London, E1 7QX, UK. Web site: <http://www.tao.ca/freedom> & email: [freedom@tao.ca](mailto:freedom@tao.ca)

A-Infos News Service: "News about and of interest to anarchists." Subscribe by email to: [majordomo@tao.ca](mailto:majordomo@tao.ca) with the message "subscribe a-infos" Web site: <http://www.ainfos.ca/>



Billboard revision by California Department of Corrections



# The Religion of Technology

Reviewed by Alex Trotter

*The Religion of Technology: The Divinity of Man and the Spirit of Invention* by David F. Noble (New York: Knopf, 1997) 274pp. \$26.00 (Canada \$36.00) hardcover.

In this book David Noble examines the history and contemporary state of the relationship between technology and religion in the Western world. A major theme is the coevolution of scientific instrumental reason and revealed religion; they are not as far apart, he says, as they might appear. Another theme, familiar from an earlier book of his entitled *A World Without Women*, is a study of the reasons why science and technology have traditionally been male domains. Specific technological projects such as artificial intelligence and genetic engineering, which make headlines today, are examined in their ideological assumptions.

In his historical overview of the development of technology, or "the useful arts," as it was once known, Noble deals primarily with the Christian clerical origins of science in medieval Western Europe and takes us up to the present-day USA. He does not discuss scientific developments in, say, ancient Greece or the medieval Islamic civilization. He starts with observations concerning certain features of Christianity inherited from Judaism: ideological elevation of humanity over nature and of man over woman (as set forth, for example, in the *Book of Genesis*), and messianism. The scientific revolution of the West that took off in the seventeenth century may have been anticlerical (i.e., at odds with the Roman Catholic Church) but was nevertheless very Christian. The vision of the avatars of technology is an eschatological one. Technology became implicated in notions of transcendence and redemption, the attempt of men to recover Adam's divine likeness, reverse the curse of the Fall, and establish the universe of Paradise regained.

The scientific culture we know today started, Noble says, with the Carolingian renaissance of Charlemagne's empire, among orders of monks, and eventually spread beyond the cloister through the efforts of mendicant friars. An early figure in the promotion of study of the useful arts and crafts was Joachim of Fiore, who founded his own order and inspired later movements such as the Franciscans. The monks pursued the "holy labor" of activities such as tanning and blacksmithing. The Benedictines were an order that worked on developing windmills, watermills, and new methods of agriculture.

The spirit of invention in Christian Europe expanded with Renaissance humanism and hermeticism in the works of men such as

Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola. The Age of Discovery that began in the thirteenth century was fueled to a great extent by a vision of evangelical challenge: to convert the Jews, Tatars, and Mongols, then crush Islam for the final victory of Christ. Christopher Columbus subsequently took this challenge on to begin the conquest of the Western Hemisphere. The development of sciences such as geography and astronomy and technologies such as navigation, metallurgy, and weaponry greatly assisted these goals.

The Reformation excited millenarian hopes (though Noble does not discuss this in connection with the great peasant jacqueries of that time), and at about this time the secret occult society of the Rosicrucians emerged to promote alchemy, divine illumination, and recovery of paradise.

It was in England in the seventeenth century, however, that the scientific revolution started to accelerate as a prelude to both the industrial revolution in that country and the political revolutions in the United States and France. One of the key figures was Francis Bacon. For Bacon, science was always conceived in utilitarian terms. "Truth and utility are the very same thing," as he put it. He was a perfectionist who believed that men are not animals but "mortal gods," and he even predicted that man would create a new species. Bacon inspired educational reforms of the Puritans in the English Revolution, in which everything was to be made practical, but in pursuit of transcendent purpose. Scientific academies and circles such as the Royal Society, the Oxford Club, and the "Invisible College" emerged.

Scientists such as Isaac Newton, Robert Boyle, James Clerk Maxwell, and Charles Babbage (inventor of the "Calculating Engine, forerunner of the computer) were all godly men. The new science was championed by many Anglican churchmen.

The concept of God as craftsman and architect was increasingly influential as the Freemasons came into their own. The Masons, a brotherhood of sons of Adam, had its origins in medieval guilds of stonemasons and in Rosicrucianism. It was in seventeenth-century England that what Noble calls "speculative Masonry" emerged (i.e., the guild became a secret society) and developed ties to the Royal Society and Anglican clergy. The Freemasons, among the earliest champions of industrialization, were to become very influential in France and the United States as well. The Masons became identified with engineering (the "civil," as opposed to military, kind) and created the Ecole Polytechnique in France, which was to nurture Henri

Saint-Simon, the technophile utopian. Saint-Simon's disciple Auguste Comte, founder of the philosophical school of positivism, called himself the "Bacon of the nineteenth century." The technologies of transport associated with American capitalism—steamboats, railroads, automobiles, airplanes, and space-flight—have all seen heavy Masonic involvement.

The main part of Noble's history deals with the march of technology's utopia of progress in the United States, "the new Eden," whose defining myth has been intimately bound to millenarian Protestantism.

Nineteenth-century America was deeply involved in a host of utopian currents that often wedded Christian and socialist concepts, a great stew mixing the evangelical Protestantism of the Second Great Awakening and its legacy with socialist ideas brought over by European emigres. In the United States, scientific and industrial revolution followed fast on the heels of religious revival. Many well-known writers and heroes of invention were quite religious: Samuel F.B. Morse, Edward Bellamy, and Thomas Edison, whom Noble calls "the ultimate utilitarian."

America's scientific mission was brought to a new level during and after World War II with the arrival of atomic scientists fleeing fascism, such as Albert Einstein, and subsequently German scientists who had worked for the Nazis, such as Werner Von Braun, who converted from the Lutheranism of his upbringing to born-again Christianity upon his transplantation to the USA. The development of rocket science and space exploration occurred against the backdrop of cold war and renewed millenarianism. Winston Churchill described the atomic bomb as "the Second Coming in Wrath." Christian theologians in the United States post-1945 latched on eagerly to the apocalyptic possibilities presented by nuclear weaponry. Billy Graham revived evangelical fervor, and Jerry Falwell preached on nuclear war as the deliverance of Armageddon. Edward Teller, scientific cold warrior, had a "religious dedication to thermonuclear weapons."

Von Braun named the early U.S. space program Adam and explained that it was God's purpose to send his Son to other worlds and bring the gospel to them. NASA became a virtual nest of evangelical belief. During the Christmas Eve 1968 flight of Apollo 8, a broadcast was made of the astronauts reading from *Genesis*, an event that was not spontaneous but carefully planned beforehand. The first astronauts were all devout Protestants, but even Pope



Paul VI hailed the Apollo 8 flight as a "millenarian event." And during the lunar landing in 1969, Edwin Aldrin held a communion ceremony on the moon. President Nixon called the landing "the greatest week since... the Creation," although Nixon's religious adviser, Billy Graham, had to remind him that he'd forgotten the birth, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ.

In the section covering the Artificial Intelligence (AI) movement, Noble takes us again back to the seventeenth century, where he finds its origins in Cartesian rationalism. Descartes saw the mind as man's heavenly

gift, separate from the body with its burden of mortality: "The body is always a hindrance to the mind in its thinking." He believed it possible and desirable to think without the body. This posed the question of how it might be possible to liberate the immortal mind from its corporeal prison so it could better strive for perfection. Descartes' scientific and mathematical successors looked for ways to codify thought on a precise logical basis and came up with a calculus of reason that would mechanically simulate the human thought process. Noble cites mathematician George Boole and the logical positivists

Bertrand Russell and A.N. Whitehead as other, sometimes reluctant, forerunners of the AI concept (Russell was not pleased that theorems from the *Principia Mathematica* could be automatically proved by a machine).

The early engineers of AI, such as Alan Turing, Norbert Wiener, and John von Neumann, started their work during World War II in the Manhattan Project or in decoding German cryptography. Later they went on to various cold war projects in the service of the American military and the national security state. Marvin Minsky, who emerged



## Alternative Media Review

as the foremost promoter of AI, worked for the military's ARPA (Advanced Research Projects Agency), which was interested in developing high-speed computer simulation of human cognitive processes. The first "virtual communities" (the term actually used) were of tank crew members working on large-scale, computer-aided armored maneuvers.

The visionaries of AI were wont to make such statements as "Technology will soon enable human beings to change into something else altogether" (Earl Cox) and "The manifest destiny of mankind is to pass the torch of life and intelligence on to the computer" (Rudy Rucker).

Similarly, the goal of the genetic engineers is a pursuit of perfection, a dream that Noble compares to Paracelsus' speculations about creating homunculi, Rabbi Löw's creation of the Golem, or God's creation of Adam. Genetics is a fairly young science. Only in the nineteenth century came discovery of the patterns of inheritance of genetic traits according to laws of mathematical probability with the work of Gregor Mendel, an Austrian cleric. At about the same time nucleic acid was discovered. By the middle of the twentieth century, the basic structure of DNA was unraveled and described in a machine-based terminology of codes and information processing. DNA came to be thought of as eternal in a sense, the material basis for immortality and resurrection of the soul.

Some geneticists, in their perfectionism, became proponents of eugenics. A manifesto was produced by Hermann J. Muller in the 1930s proclaiming that the breeding of genius should be a human birthright. Not only could livestock be made to produce more milk and plants be made to grow in colder climates through genetic manipulation, but genes for IQ in humans could be tracked down. In 1969 geneticist Robert Sinshelmer called for a "new eugenics" to bring the unfit up to the highest level. By the 1990s it became possible to isolate genes for certain inherited diseases and to clone human embryos in laboratories.

Sinshelmer was one of the leaders of the effort to establish the Human Genome Project (HGP), which got started in 1990 with federal funding and whose purpose is to map and sequence all the genes of the human body. The community of scientists working on this project describe the human genome as the holy grail of genetics, reports Noble, who remarks upon the enduring influence of the mythology of medieval Christianity in a scientific community that now includes a high percentage of Jews and atheists.

The HGP has many religious supporters. The majority of churches endorse it. The director (as of the book's writing) of the project, Francis Collins, is a member of the American Scientific Affiliation, an evangelical

Christian organization. There is even an official dialogue between genetic scientists and theologians.

In conclusion, Noble emphasizes the continuity of the technological brotherhood from monks to hermetic philosophers to Masons to modern engineers, and their elitism and service to official power through the centuries. The new technologies were never meant to be universal and don't truly meet human needs. The roots of ecological crisis lie in the Christian dogma of man's transcendence of nature and the notion that the needs of mortals are not of the most important consequence. Women have not been identified with the religion of technology because Eve, lacking perfection, could not regain it; as the proximate cause of the Fall, woman can only be an impediment to its reversal. At the Resurrection, sex (i.e., the female sex) will disappear and Adam's man will be restored as if he had never sinned. Noble points out that to this day science, and particularly applied science, remains a masculine realm; there are few women in engineering, none at all in the Lawrence Livermore labs, and there weren't until recently women in the space program. Finally, he describes cloning as a product of the desire to turn reproduction into a "chaste male affair" without women. It's not too hard, however, to see that cloning could also be used to reproduce without men. And, surely, if women were equally represented at Livermore Labs, that would hardly constitute a social improvement!

Noble declares, in a strong statement, "Put simply, the technological pursuit of salvation has become a threat to our survival." He modestly hopes to deflate otherworldly dreams of the technocratic elite and "redirect our astonishing capabilities toward more worldly and humane ends," though he offers very little in elaboration of the shape this goal should assume or what he thinks it would take to achieve it. He points out that women were at one time well represented in the useful arts, but were shunted aside and increasingly restricted from Carolingian times on, and largely remain so today. It appears to be not so much technology per se, but technology invested with Judeo-Christian spiritual significance, that he objects to, but he's somewhat vague about this.

At one point Noble describes Marxism as "the most influential Western prophetic system since that of Joachim of Fiore" because it neatly complemented the Christian millenarian promise with its own promise of a world liberated from labor by machines. If this is true (and it is to the extent that Marxism became an ideology—or religion, if you like—of economic development and socialism a crude imitation of capitalism), he has almost nothing to say about it. One reason may be that his focus is on the religion of technology in the United States, where Marx-

ism has had only a very small influence. Had his book concentrated on Europe and Russia, it would have been necessary for him to treat that subject in greater detail. Noble mentions only in passing the Soviet space program, implying that everything worth saying about it is covered in his study of the American space program.

In *The Religion of Technology* Noble mounts a powerful attack on the patriarchal religious aspect of technology. But he makes no effort to connect this to a critique of capital, and largely restricts his critique of technology to a feminist one. Nevertheless, the book is well written and a worthwhile read. As a historian of science Noble seems to know his material very well. His book comes along at a time when there is widespread and growing skepticism about technology and industrialism. The space program no longer generates much popular enthusiasm, anxieties proliferate about cloning and global warming, and evangelical Christian millenarianism appears to be running out of gas. At least, let's hope so.

## Saving Capitalism

Review by John Zerzan

*The Real Report on the Last Chance to Save Capitalism in Italy by "Censor" (Flatland Books, POB 2420, Fort Bragg, CA 95437, 1997) 108pp. \$9.95 paper.*

This "report," by Gianfranco Sanguinetti (with help from Guy Debord) was written in 1975 and initially distributed to several hundred Italian businessmen and related bourgeois functionaries, publicists, etc. In the guise of a dispassionate analysis of what was needed in order for the ruling class to secure its power, the perspective of that class is revealed in many essentials. A Henry Kissinger, were he in possession of such an accomplished style, might have written a similar guide to domestic principles and policy for a time of crisis. And the style is admirable, certainly equal to the work's command of history, with the occasional phrase or observation from the likes of Herodotus, Dante, and Machiavelli.

It reveals, as the supposed contribution of a highly-placed and astute insider might, how the project of class domination has been managed and will need to be managed. The situationist document calls for, among other things, a prudent reform of the nation's key institutions and a role for the communists and the unions in maintaining bourgeois hegemony. The generalized crisis of 1975 viz. the undisciplined demands of the

workers, it is alleged, required such measures.

But if the "Real Report" (and the minor scandal it caused when its radical author was revealed) was the last major public tactic by a member of the Situationist International, its grasp of the situation in Italy was already outdated. Sanguinetti speaks, in 1975, as if the wildcat strikes and rioting that prevailed in the fall of 1969 were still going on. Wishing that the movement of the 1960s had not ended, the report asserts that the oil crisis of 1973 had only deepened the social and economic crisis. In fact, the belt-tightening brought on by the 1973 "energy crisis" was closing off contestation, in Italy as elsewhere. Contrary to "Censor," and despite the most ardent desires of others of us everywhere at the time, revolution was no longer at all likely.

## The Secret Army

Review by Paul Z. Simons

*The Secret Army: The IRA (revised Third Edition) by J. Bowyer Bell (Transaction Publishers, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 08903) 702pp. \$26.95 paper.*

I have read a previous edition of this history of the Irish Republican Army, and just finished this newly revised edition. The volume is probably the closest thing we'll ever have to an exhaustive history of the IRA, though certain important sections are very slim.

For instance, the author spends much more space on the civil war, following Free State Treaty ratification than he does on the Tan War, where a handful of soldiers, no more than 3-5,000 battled the British Empire to its knees in three short years.

The author, it should be noted, runs his own security firm which consults on such topics as unconventional war, terrorism, deception and risk analysis. One expects a rather unsympathetic view of the "lads." In fact it is fairly even-handed and probably what ranks the author more than anything else is not only the longevity of the IRA, but also the fact that as of now they seem to have accomplished what they set out to do.

There are expanded sections in this edition covering the past six years just prior to the Labour victory in 1997 and the movement towards a cease fire and possibly peace. This is unfortunate for unlike previous attempts at reunification in the North, the IRA and its political wing Sinn Féin have not only consolidated their power base but have implemented the longest cease fire since the "Troubles" of the late sixties. Indeed, some of the splinter Unionist groups seem to be the main stumbling block now to a political

## Alternative Media Review

This elegantly written fake offers many insights into a period that had just ended, and should be enjoyed accordingly. It may also serve, from today's perspective, to introduce new questions.

The situationists were the best and perhaps the last of the left. Sanguinetti's offering is firmly predicated on a class-struggle outlook. Is domination, in this era of the runaway technicizing of existence, best understood from the classic workers' movement perspective? Are there not even deeper causes of our captivity? Whence the present crisis?

Of course, it is unreasonable to expect that what speaks to us from an earlier period can give us the answers to our own. But Sanguinetti provided many insights, and Len Bracken's excellent translation is a definite contribution in itself.

no future. This allows temps to see their environment and fellow workers in a detached, critical fashion.

What is also interesting in the book is that most of the stories detail in one way or another sabotage, stealing, and slacking. Which brings us back to one of the basic anarchist presuppositions of this part of the century: work is drudgery, and one way to make employment palatable is by doing economic harm to one's employer.

My favorite vignette in the book is by Brendan P. Bartholomew, and details his employment at Sega, answering the 'complaint and information line. In the piece he enumerates his subversive activities at Sega, including masturbatory bathroom breaks, drinking on the job, and misusing the company mail. This last entry includes the author's frustration at not really having anything worthwhile to steal and mail, he did his best. He sent friends packages of tea from the commissary, he sent out OTC meds from the emergency medical kit, as well as rubber gloves, just about anything he could lay his hands on. This level of obsessive sabotage and *de facto* embezzlement speaks well for the average American worker. There might be hope yet.

If you can find a copy of this book it comes highly recommended. And it might be a good idea to get a copy of the zine as well.

## Levelling

Review by John Zerzan

*Book of Levelling* by John Moore (Ninth Wave, Bedford, England, 1995) 24pp. \$2.50 pamphlet.

Briefer and not at all "scholarly," Moore's latest booklet lacks the footnotes of his *Anarchy and Ecstasy* (1989) but is certainly not lacking in imagination, zeal, or poetic visionary flights. Made up of six wild and timely meditations of a few pages each, this *Book* is a very fertile contribution in favor of re-enchancing existence.

The first offering is a crazed celebration of gender reversal and gender confusion. Next, a somehow even more surreal piece about a chess game (with body parts as pieces) and dance with Death. Then a birthing becomes creation and growth incarnate, flowing into unbounded resistance. Faery folk of Old England follow, as reminder and metaphor for our own tactics of desire. The last two prose-poems present Hell as the present techno-totality (with Heaven as its destruction), and a joyful call to arms which spins off from Samhain, the Celtic anti-class distinction antecedent to Halloween.

All in all, in only 24 pages, an extremely rich, playful and provocative pamphlet.



# Grand National Holiday

Review by Bob Black

*Grand National Holiday and Congress of the Productive Classes* by William Benbow (Pelagian Press, BCM Signpost, London, WC1N 3XX, England) 28pp. \$5.95/£2.50 pamphlet.

In 1832, the National Union of the Working Classes published this once-notorious pamphlet. The author, William Benbow, then 48, was an English artisan and lifelong agitator whose historic contribution to radical political thought was the Grand National Holiday of the Working Classes—later and better known as the General Strike. He called for a one-month universal work stoppage during which the producers would send representatives "to establish the happiness of the immense majority of the human race, of that far largest portion called the working classes," just as the elite assemblies to secure its happiness in Parliament.

Benbow was not very specific about what the Congress would do, but he was essentially a leveller. English society was rotten because of "too much idleness on the one hand, and too much toil on the other." Every wealthy idler "must be made [to] work in order to cure his unsoundness." But unlike the syndicalists, who later took up the call for a general strike, Benbow, though he rather romanticized workers as the repository of virtue, did not glorify work or summon the masses to prodigies of production. It was a simple matter of equal rights and responsibilities, including "equal toil" and "equal share of production." If anything, Benbow anticipated the anti-work standpoint:

"Every portion must be made work, and then the work will become so light, that it will not be considered work, but wholesome exercise. Can any thing be more humane than the main object of our glorious holiday, namely, to obtain for all at the least expense to all, the largest sum of happiness for all?" In other words, to Calvinist-Marxist nonsense here about work as a calling from God (or History) or labor as the realization of the human essence: the less work, the better. There is only a hint, if even that, of his contemporary Fourier's argument for the trans-

formation of work into productive play (it is highly unlikely Benbow had heard of Fourier by 1832). But William Morris would later produce a sophisticated synthesis of, in effect, Benbow's and Fourier's approaches to the transformation of work.

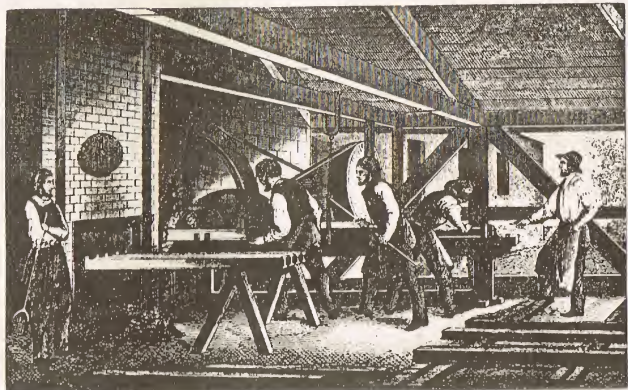
Much more original, and interesting, than his proposal for a Congress was Benbow's proposal for the Grand National Holiday. As

Then every seventh year was "the year of release," a "continued—unceasing festival; it was a season of instruction; it was a relief to poor debtors." Benbow (a Christian, although he hosted "infidel chapels" where blasphemous rituals were performed and he was prosecuted for publishing pornography) clearly drew upon, and sought to reactivate deep, and deeply buried Protestant plebeian

dissident tendencies which went back to the English Civil War and even earlier. His vaguely communist economic program goes back to the Diggers. His hedonism, his longing to revive "not only religious feasts, but political ones," and (as we know from his soft-core porn—examples of which are appended to this edition) his aspiration to sexual freedom place him squarely in the counter-cultural tradition of the Ranters.

The Holiday, that is, prefigured the permanent revolution of its delegates to the extra-Parliamentary Congress were supposed to institutionalize. Indeed those on Holiday were not to wait on their delegates. Benbow suggested that working people store up enough food and money to get them through the first week of the Holiday without working. By then they should be organized enough to requisition what they need to make it through the next three weeks.

Rich liberals, he slyly suggests—the rich liberals who had just won the vote for themselves thanks to working-class agitation, then turned around to deny the vote to the same workers—would be happy to act on their liberal reform convictions by sharing out so what they have to those embarked upon so worthy a cause, "all the great reformers are to be applied to, and the people will have no longer any reason to suspect reformers' consistency. The reformers will hold out an open hand to support us during our festival...Until they are tried no one can imagine the number of great men ready to promote equal rights, equal justice, and equal laws all throughout the Kingdom." On a point of detail, the Congress will assemble somewhere in the middle of England under



we have seen, for Benbow the proper ends of society—purposes it failed to serve except for "the idle, dronish few"—were "ease, gaiety, pleasure and happiness." The people "have not even existed, for they have not enjoyed life." Others have done the enjoying, the living, in their stead. "The people are nothing for themselves, and everything for the few." (And still are.) The Grand National Holiday was how Benbow proposed to kick off this revolution of egalitarian hedonism, but it was also something else: it was revolutionary egalitarian hedonism. No need to agonize and moralize whether the ends justify the means when they are one and the same.

Benbow's Holiday hearkens back to pre-capitalist revelry in ways lost to his syndicalist successors. He does not shrink from saying the Holiday is "a holy day, and ours is to be of holy days the most holy," for it "is established to establish plenty, to abolish want, to render all men equal!" He is (he insists) no innovator. "The Sabbath was a weekly festival" for the ancient Hebrews when they fed upon manna, in abundance, when "no servile work was done, and servants and masters knew no distinction."

the auspices of "some great liberal lord":

"It should be a central position, and the mansion of some great liberal lord, with its out houses and appurtenances. The only difficulty of choice will be to fix upon a central one, for they are all sufficiently vast to afford lodging to the members of the Congress, their lands will afford nourishment, and their parks a beautiful place for meeting.

"It may be relied upon, that the possession of the mansion honoured by the people's choice, will make those splendid preparations for the representatives of the sovereignty of the people, that are usually made for the reception of a common sovereign."

Benbow was no theorist or seer. He held a rather simplistic sub-Enlightenment opinion that the people were enslaved by their elite-enforced ignorance (there's a lot more to it than that). Into the 1850s (when he is lost to view) he agitated mainly for universal suffrage, something which, once won a decade later, never did level the class system in Britain. In other capitalist class societies—the United States, for instance—there never existed the monarchs, aristocrats and bishops Benbow mostly (but not, to be sure, entirely) blamed for the oppression of the people. The American experience proves that exploitation is very effective (perhaps more effective) without these archaic social residues.

The Grand National Holiday is an exemplary resolution of what might be called, echoing the Prisoner's Dilemma, the Revolutionary's Dilemma. To make a social revolution, people as they now are must make a revolution out of existing materials. Revolution requires continuity. But for it to count as a social revolution, people must live in a new and qualitatively different way. Revolution requires discontinuity. Rapidly and radically, what is living in the existing order—where, to live at all, it is probably latent, disguised or deformed—has to be freed of what is dead. Miscalculating which is which is disastrous. Marx and the syndicalists, for instance, thought that what was living in capitalism was the development of the productive forces with the concomitant emergence of the first universal class, the proletariat. The revolution therefore implied the socialization, rationalization and intensification of industrial development, as well as the generalization of the proletarian condition. It is by now obvious, except to a handful of sectarians, that the development of the productive forces perennially renews capitalism. And proletarianization has eliminated enclaves of working-class community and elaborately segmented the labor force to the detriment of class consciousness. Productivism and workerism proved to be ideologies of capitalism.

Benbow's resolution of the Dilemma, in contrast, in retrospect appears revolutionary if incomplete. The Holiday tapped collective

memories of cooperative accomplishment and communal festivity. It tapped individual memories of shorter hours or work, many more holidays, and relative autonomy in production. The Sabbath the workers remembered was indeed, as Benbow reminded them, a sacred time—but the Sacred was by then a contested concept. For the Dissenters (heirs to the Puritans) the Sabbath was a day of abstinence from work, certainly, a day of rest, but it was also a day of prayer, public worship and abstinence from enjoyment. For most workers, rest and recreation in fellowship with one another was the essence of the sacred. Its religious character

**The Holiday is everything the General Strike could be and more. It's something all anti-authoritarians should be able to agree on, as they all want at least that much to happen to eviscerate corporate and state power. That much accomplished, the people can decide if they want to go back to work under workers' councils or federated trade-unions or never go back to work....**

was diffuse, permeating ordinary enjoyments like eating, drinking and dancing, not concentrated in specialized, discrete activities unrelated to the rest of life. For the Dissenter or the Methodist, when he was not performing explicitly and exclusively religious functions on Sunday he should not be doing anything at all. It was only partly in mockery that workers referred to their unauthorized Monday holiday as "Saint Monday"—the bane of employers—when they either resumed or slept off Sunday's revels. The name also implied that this work-free day, like Sunday, was a holy day.

So far the Holiday is continuous with a still-remembered and not entirely vanished past. What then is revolutionary and discontinuous about it? Mainly this. Traditional community was a matter of custom, not conscious contrivance, and it was local, parochial. As such it was dismantled piecemeal by enclosure acts, having already been divided by class differentiation and perhaps religious disunion. It was difficult to perceive,

from within, that the unique fate of a local community, which might be generations in the unfolding, was a moment in a national trend. Under these circumstances, Benbow's insistence that "ignorance is the source of all the misery of the many" is more than merely a naive relic of Enlightenment optimism. (Although it echoed another current of thought—the "Jacobinism" of Thomas Paine and the Corresponding Societies of the 1790s—which still influenced radical thinking.) It was now necessary for "the many," "the people," the "productive classes" to think of themselves on a national scale in order to act for themselves, then they will be a people: "When they fight for themselves, then they will be a people, then they will live, then they will have ease, gaiety, pleasure and happiness; but never until they do fight for themselves." The remedy "is simply—unity of thought and action.—Think together, act together, and you will remove mountains—mountains of injustice, oppression, misery and want."

The Holiday recreates community on a national scale, the only scale on which it is now possible—but this means simultaneous, generalized local actions. It recovers the festive, sacred content of holy days at the same time that it consciously withdraws labor from the nonproducing classes who enjoy its fruits. It is the General Strike and a party, the longest "rave" ever, all rolled up in one, freedom as necessity, necessity as freedom. Benbow is quite insistent that the Holiday precede and, at its own pace, produce the Congress. Only in conditions of unhurried leisure and unrestrained play is it reasonable to expect the people to deliberate upon the shape of the future and choose trustworthy delegates to the Congress.

Benbow's scheme unwittingly acknowledges—and at the same time gets around—the insight, at least as old as Plato and Aristotle and very much meaningful to the English ruling class, that wage-laborers, like slaves, are unfit to vote because they lack the economic independence to vote their own minds. Today, of course, it is not a question of bosses telling workers how to vote but rather the way work preempts the time and often warps the faculties necessary for responsible citizenship. The Holiday could hardly undo the damage already done to workers by wage-labor in general and factory work in particular (to which even Adam Smith attested). But it could relieve the workers for a not negligible period of the need to work and concern for subsistence ("committees of management of the working classes" were to have requisitioned provisions sufficient to last the Holiday). The Holiday interrupted the vicious circle of self-perpetuating proletarian political incapacity orchestrated from above.

Benbow was not just a plebeian putting a proletarian spin on scraps of utilitarian doctrine as so many "Radicals" then did. He



espoused the greatest happiness of the greatest number, but he had his own ideas about that entailed, and share-the-wealth and the overthrow of inherited privilege were only part of the program. Benbow appreciated that the quality of life was more than a matter of redistributing the wealth and enfranchising the workers. Sounding very much like the "Young Marx" or some other Left Hegelian, Benbow says: "The existence of the working man is a *negative*. He is alive to production, misery, and slavery—dead to enjoyment and happiness." In the worker there is (as Croce said there was in Marxism) something living and something dead. What was dead in the worker was what made him a worker, his work, "production," and what it entailed, misery and slavery. What was alive was whatever the worker preserved in the shrinking sphere of life apart from work. But what happened at work affected the worker on the job and off: "By saying what the people *do*, we explain what they *are*. By saying what they *can* and *ought* to *do*, we explain what they *can* and *ought* to *be*." Fundamentally it comes down to the possibility of self-activity (whether individual or collective or what combination of the two is an important but secondary concern).

We now know that as to means to the end, Benbow was mistaken in several respects. Universal suffrage never ushered in the revolution—on occasion, as Proudhon put it, "Universal suffrage is the counter-revolution." As for redistributing the wealth, it has never been tried, although it's been approximated for brief periods, in small areas, during the Russian and Spanish and other modern revolutions. But significant redistribution of wealth has taken place, in Britain, for instance, and in the Scandinavian social democracies. Benbow would doubtless be delighted that the descendants of the "liberal lords" he despised (and the conservative lords, too) have been stripped of most of their wealth and reduced, in some cases, to charging admission to tourists to view their stately homes. But this has not changed the fact that, as all Britons are well aware, Britain is still a capitalist class society, if not a particularly prosperous, progressive one. The working class is still, in current argot, *knackered*.

Benbow's enduring interest is not as a prophet—although as prophets go, he compares favorably to Marx—but as formulating, for his time and place, a solution to the Revolutionary's Dilemma. Whether it would have worked we'll never know. As Benbow's modern editor, S.A. Bushell, explains, there was serious opposition to Benbow's proposal even within the organization which published it, and efforts to commence the Holiday proved abortive. Although what Benbow expected of the Holiday and the Congress is rather vague, they were clearly to redress both political and economic injustice, which

the Radical Whig tradition had always regarded as interrelated (this was "corruption," not a generic term of moralistic abuse but a term of art in radical libertarian ideology). Benbow's ideas lost relevance when radical and/or working-class activism diverged into discrete political and economic channels (and into more than one of each). Benbow himself seems to have devoted the rest of his life to political reform—specifically, to enlarging the electorate. Others pursued economic improvement through trade-union organization. The politically and the economically-oriented in turn split into reformist and revolutionary currents, a distinction Benbow would not have considered meaningful, although it was soon to become crucial.

What is living in Benbow's celebrated tract? Maybe more than there ever has been between his time and ours. It is a concrete and plausible resolution to the Revolutionary's Dilemma in the form it assumed at that conjuncture and, as such, an example which makes the Dilemma vivid for us, although it assumes other forms today. But, as editor Bushell contends, the Holiday might actually be worth trying today, if the General Strike were reconceived as an unauthorized Holiday: perhaps "the old strike idea might gain in popularity if we reverted to the old description." After all, the counter-cultural

revolutionaries have never had any objection to a universal work stoppage, indeed, they are rather more into it than the syndicalists, for they see no reason why it should ever end. Productive activity, to be sure, would eventually have to resume, but work might not have to. Something Benbow said about the Holiday—something no advocate of the General Strike ever seems to have said—is that it is an opportunity for *reflection*, "to get rid of our ignorant impatience, and to learn what it is we do want." To think freely, unhurriedly. The Holiday is everything the General Strike could be and more. It's something all anti-authoritarians should be able to agree on, as they all want at least that much to happen to eviscerate corporate and state power. That much accomplished, the people can decide if they want to go back to work under workers' councils or federated trade-unions or never go back to work at all. Probably some people will make one choice, other people others. Maybe, after an initial phase of experimentation, some arrangement will shake out which accommodates what is living in these various systems. Anyone who genuinely desires universal freedom ought not to shrink from a real opportunity to test what form (or lack thereof) she thinks freedom would take. Why not take a Holiday and see what happens?



Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed

Spring/Summer 1998

## Beyond Bookchin

Review by Jason McQuinn

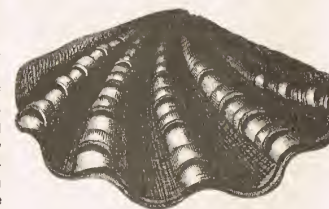
*Beyond Bookchin: Preface for a Future Social Ecology.* David Watson (Black and Red, POB 02374, Detroit, MI 48202; and Autonomedia, POB 568 Williamsburgh Station, Brooklyn, NY 11211-0568, 1996) 249pp. \$8.00 paper.

Murray Bookchin has been one of the most prolific writers on radical ecology for decades, beginning with his early work, *Our Synthetic Environment*, published under the pseudonym of Lewis Herber in 1963, and continuing with *Post-Scarcity Anarchism* (1971), *Toward an Ecological Society* (1980), *The Ecology of Freedom* (1982) and *The Modern Crisis* (1986), to name some of his more important books. Over the years he has attempted to develop a coherent social and ecological critique of contemporary society. Beginning from an earlier participation in the radical labor movement and an engagement with Marxist political theory, he was eventually led to synthesize a post-Marxist, eco-anarchist perspective which he calls social ecology.

However, despite the fact that his work has had some perceptible influences amongst left ecologists and (pro-technology) ecological anarchists, the grand hopes Bookchin once held for his own version of social ecology to gain hegemony within the more general radical political and ecological milieu have not been fulfilled. And he has increasingly been reduced of late to desperate defenses of his own claims to ideological importance, coupled with bitter, eco-Stalinist denunciations of those he perceives as more successful rivals. Several of his recent efforts, including *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm* (1995), provide prime examples in which much bitter spleen is vented but little rational argument is generated.

This has led David Watson, a veteran contributor to the radical social and ecological milieu himself (and author of an excellent, earlier critique, *How Deep Is Deep Ecology?*, published under the pseudonym of George Bradford in 1989), to attempt to save the most valuable insights behind the general idea of a social ecology from the undeserved descent into obscurity that might well otherwise result from the ongoing degeneration of Bookchin's own thought and writings. And in *Beyond Bookchin: Preface for a Future Social Ecology*, Watson has succeeded admirably in reconstructing some of the necessary foundations for a broader social ecological perspective from the too-often vague, self-contradictory or one-sided pronouncements that can be found throughout the corpus of Bookchin's work.

This effort at reconstruction involves a critique of Bookchin's—as Watson puts it—"hyper-rationalism," and of his attraction to a rather incoherent form of Hegelian theorizing (including his search for the chimera of an "objective ethics," an unwieldy dialectical naturalism, etc.). It also involves a critique of his disregard for the relatively autonomous influence of technological development on



society and nature, and for his recurrent insensitivity to the value of the perspectives of indigenous peoples, primitivists, and of other species as well.

Watson points out in his introduction that: "Bookchin's recent regression to ideological sclerosis suggests social ecology itself may be in crisis. Tragically, this radical notion of an ecological politics grounded in social critique and the promise of liberatory transformation now seems far less than what it might have become...Bookchin's once complex, ambiguous ideas have fossilized into dogma—the fate perhaps of too many unrealized utopian schemes." Watson goes on to predict that: "Social ecology will outlast its founder and realize its radical potential only if social ecologists can abandon his compulsions and elaborate new orders of thinking."

Watson's weakness, in turn, is his own tendency towards a one-sided appropriation and valuation of spiritual narratives and traditions to the detriment of a holistic perspective which would recognize that both the secular/scientific and spiritual/religious traditions embody ambiguous tendencies *both* towards social alienation and domination as well as towards social liberation with an accompanying goal of ecological reconstruction. Where Bookchin posits a naturalistic rationality as unquestionably superior to pre-scientific/non-scientific indigenous and/or religious and mystical traditions, Watson wants to admit both scientific and spiritual perspectives while still arguing for the primacy of the latter. However, at a time when

more and more people are beginning to see through grand cultural narratives like History, Reason, Civilization and Progress, a consistent skepticism for all grand concepts and sublime ideas is definitely called for. Unfortunately, Watson's privileging of spiritual traditions undermines the radical questioning required to get to the deeper roots of our present impasse.

And even more unfortunately, the book could have been much better edited. A shorter version which reigned in some of the author's unnecessarily complex sentences and lengthy digressions would make the text much more easily readable. While many of the details in the book are carefully argued, the overall structure is amorphous and bloated in a way that will inevitably discourage any but the most persistent and committed of readers. An index would have rendered it more valuable as well. Still, this is an important book, despite its flaws. It represents one more step in the developing social ecological radicalism of which we'll undoubtedly be hearing much more.

## Pirate Radio Operations

Review by Lawrence Jarach

*Pirate Radio Operations* by Andrew Yoder and Earl T. Gray (Loompanics Unlimited, POB 1197, Port Townsend, WA 98368, 1997) 376pp. \$19.95 paper.

Oh great, I thought, another book published by Loompanics, sure to contain lots and lots of words with very little information. Imagine my surprise when I discovered that my assumption was incorrect! This book not only has lots of photos with explanations on what kind of equipment is needed to set up your own micro-powered radio station (this is the term we at Free Radio Berkeley prefer to "pirate radio"), but it also has pretty good sections on what sorts of problems you might encounter should you decide to construct your own station. While not exhaustive and certainly not up to date (since the FCC and their minions have stepped up their suppressive efforts in the last several months), this thick book is much more than a curiosity or novelty. And I never thought I'd actually say this, but I'm recommending this Loompanics book to anyone interested in micro-powered broadcasting.



of? For example, denouncing something written by his ideological competition while continually espousing it elsewhere. AAL contains a number of clear examples of this hypocrisy. Bob also points out something interesting (Freud 101?)—that Bookchin dislikes and trashes people like P.J. Proudhon and Paul Goodman, whose ideas about the organization of society are often actually quite close to Bookchin's. Hmmm. Black has obviously done his homework. As a matter of fact, the Dean would have a lot of red marks all over SALA if he had handed it into me as a freshman term paper; AAL runs with some of the more obvious flunkey flubs. Black points out the fallacy of many of the labels attributed to the so-called "lifestyle anarchists" in SALA but unfortunately Bob sometimes doesn't bother to back up his arguments. (Well, then again, why should he do all the work?) Not that he's necessarily defending any of those attacked in SALA; he's simply "debunking the very category of lifestyle anarchism as a construct as meaningless as it is malicious." (p.14)

And malicious it is, using abstract terms with alarming inaccuracy, labeling his opponents whatever will inspire ire, be it bourgeois or lumpen (and in this case, both bourgeois and lumpen), employing class-baiting with fine discrimination, in short, using the highly manipulative methodology of all great chairmen.

While Bookchin lambastes the "bourgeois" (a category, Bob points out, like the term "decadence," which Bookchin apparently picked up from his time in the Stalinist left), Bookchin himself has a "bourgeois" career, more so than anybody he attacks in his cheap trick. He spits out the word "yuppies" and Bob (hilariously) ponders over which part of the acronym the Dean could possibly object to.

There's lots of funny stuff in this terrible tome, but the second half will challenge your brain, that is if you'll let it be challenged.

The second half of the book deals with various questions such as libertarian municipalism, objective reality and leftism in the anarchist movement. It is at once strong but also one of the weak points of the book; all of these topics deserve far more discussion and reading through. I get the distinct feeling that some of the arguments need to be more thoroughly developed to convince many readers of their weight. However, none of it is especially academically stilted and much of it does point the inquisitive reader in the right direction for further self-study.

The first problem that Black tackles is the problem of individualist anarchism, a term that Bookchin uses like a curse word to down his opponents. Bookchin writes about the contradiction between individual autonomy and a collectivist commitment to social freedom; this is the "unbridgeable chasm" his book pretends to locate. Shit, this "con-

tradition" has been rather well examined for the last 150 years (the entire history of the established anarchist tradition) and actually for centuries before that; this big revelation is not only no new problem, but a problem that Bookchin handles much more poorly than most of the anarchist theorists before him. (I've met 15-year old kids from Jersey with more lucid takes on this problem than the old Dean!) What Black points out are the anti-anarchist implications of such thinking: "If the Dean is right—that individual autonomy and social liberation are not just in tension but *basically contradictory*—then anarchism is impossible, as anti-anarchists have

**The first thing that has to be said about this subversive little tract is don't go looking for it in your local anarchist bookstore...you probably won't find this book, and that's a real shame. 'Cause it's a really good one, on my top ten reads of '97. The reason, for those of you not privy to the latest scandals, is the dirty deeds of the author. Be they as they may (maybe), Anarchy after Leftism is exactly the kind of book that people interested in anarchist theory and practice should be reading—critical, intelligent and concerned with dozens of issues to be discussed.**

always maintained." (p.31) Just for good measure, Bob throws in Kropotkin's far more revolutionary take—maybe the Dean should head back to the library.

Further, and this should really piss people off, Bob writes that "Anarchism rejects the dichotomy as false...In an anarchist society the individual gains freedom, not at the expense of others, but in cooperation with them. A person who believes that this condition—anarchy—is possible and desirable is called an anarchist. A person who thinks it is

not possible or not desirable is a statist." (p.33) Actually this definition is not precise, but the idea is clear. Does this mean that Black says the Dean *isn't* an anarchist? Well, in so many words, yes.

Now I hate these true anarchist wars (libertarians? council commies? syndicalists? Bob Black?) but, Black's claim that Bookchin is a municipal statist (that his isn't the nation-state but the city-state) is worth a look-see. I've heard some strong critiques of libertarian municipalism (I've done a number myself), and quite frankly this one could have been better—gone more into depth on the issue, because it's a big issue this vision of how decisions are to be made in the absence of coercive authority. There is a social sphere in addition to the individual sphere and many people are convinced that democratic decision-making is the only feasible way of running things. (I personally think democracy is bunk but do sometimes agree to that form of decision making, with flexible application.) It's not that easy to give a few examples of the pitfalls of democracy (although Socrates condemned to death by the democratic Athenians is a *perfect* example) because consensus is also problematic. (And free association—another problem, as if much association wasn't forced by some kind of necessity. But I digress...) Black has a lot of sharp, valid criticism of this municipal strain of Bookchin's theory and asks how the fuck Bookchin can glorify the Athenian city-state when it largely functioned on slave labor, which, by the way, Bookchin has often denied. (Hope nobody has missed the irony here—that Bookchin has criticized the "primitivists" for glorifying anarchic societies which he claims never existed.)

Finally, Black does a little critique of anarcho-leftism. Very little. Although there is much against traditional leftist mentality in the book, only the last three paragraphs actually begin to spell out what he considers to be the three main tendencies of anarcho-leftism. This turns out to be especially weak and, hey, the title of the book is, after all, *Anarchy after Leftism*; a whole separate book should be devoted to the subject. As it is, it turns out that a critique of anarcho-syndicalism as an obsolete ideology has, as its main arguments, that many of its adherents are elderly, that they have no real presence, that syndicalists are usually not proletarians and that they are dull. I don't know why this is so abrupt (money? space? last minute addition?); the anarcho-syndicalists themselves can make a better critique of their own ideas. It turns out looking unintelligent and petty. The same is true about "pure-and-simple" anarchism and anarcho-feminism; as a critique (and there is a lot to critique) there is just nothing there. Thumbs down to this rush ending. Still, by time you get to it, you will have read a lot of intelligent and incisive stuff. Hey, nothing is perfect.

## Reinventing Anarchy, Again

Review by Jason McQuinn

*Reinventing Anarchy, Again.* Howard J. Ehrlich, editor (AK Press, POB 40682, San Francisco, CA 94140-0682; or AK Press, POB 12766, Edinburgh, EH8 9YE, Scotland, 1996) 387pp. \$19.95/£13.95 paper.

A spate of academic anthologies concerning the international anarchist movement were published in the sixties and early seventies in the first days of its contemporary rebirth, including (to name the most important) George Woodcock's *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements* (1962), James Joll's *The Anarchists* (1964), Irving Horowitz's *The Anarchists* (1964), Leonard Krimmerman & Lewis Perry's *Patterns of Anarchy* (1966), and Marshall Sztatz's *The Essential Works of Anarchism* (1971). However, since that time, though the output of the anarchist press around the world has skyrocketed, introductory anthologies have been few and far between.

This makes the appearance of a new and completely revised edition of the major North American anarchist anthology published in the interim, *Reinventing Anarchy* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), an important event. And this is true, especially since the new edition, unfortunately featuring a somewhat redundant new title, *Reinventing Anarchy, Again*, includes a lot of new material, retaining fewer than half of the essays published in the original edition.

Of course, no anthology of writings from a milieu as broad and as diverse as the anarchist can be expected to cover even a small fraction of the ideas and practices currently fermenting. Almost any anthology of writings tends to overrepresent academic spokesmen, all too often having little connection to the grassroots of the milieu. And it would be an exceptional anthologist who could give every major anarchist perspective an equal platform with his own. However, beyond these limitations, Howard Ehrlich, editor of the journal *Social Anarchism*, has managed to compile a fair sampling of materials which can give any reader at least an introductory glimpse of important elements of contemporary anarchism. And a nice touch in the new edition is the inclusion of collage illustrations by several anarchist artists—Freddie Baer, John Yates and Johann Humyn Being.

Ehrlich divides his 34 selections into eight sections: "What is Anarchism," "The State and Social Organization," "Moving Toward Anarchist Society," "Anarchafeminism," "Work," "The Culture of Anarchy," "The Liberation of Self," and "Reinventing Anarchist Tactics." Most notable in the larger scheme of the book's organization are the deletion of

the section on "Criticism of the Left: Old and New" from the original edition (a very curious deletion at a time when anarchists could be poised to finally make a real break with a leftism in worldwide decline) and the addition of a section in the new edition on "The Culture of Anarchy," covering aspects of media critique, film, poetry and music.

Just as striking is the general toning down of selections containing critiques from the more radical reaches of the anarchist milieu. Most of the essays exalting the insurrectionary tendencies given new life in the late '60s and early '70s have been replaced with more academic or more reform-minded contributions. Gone are most of the situationist tracts: *Point Blank*'s "The Storms of Youth," the excerpts from the incendiary pamphlet *On the Poverty of Student Life*, and Robert Cooperstein's "The Production and Consumption of Humans." In their place are fairly innocuous contributions like George Benello's "The Challenge of Mondragon," Ruthann Robson's "Living Our Lives," and

Caroline Estes' on "Consensus."

On the other hand strong contributions from Murray Bookchin ("Anarchism Past and Present"), Bob Black ("The Abolition of Work"), and George Bradford ("Media—Capital's Global Village") are all at least as important as some of the better essays from the first edition which didn't make the cut in the second. However, some extremely important anarchist writers have also been inexplicably left out, including Fredy Perlman, John Zerzan (whose essay "Organized Labor versus 'the Revolt Against Work'" was included in the original version), Hakim Bey and Noam Chomsky. Arguably, an anthology without contributions from each of these essential writers can hardly be considered representative of the contemporary anarchist milieu.

All in all, *Reinventing Anarchy, Again* is an uneven, fairly academic, but very important anthology which should be available to readers in every book shop and library across the continent.

## The Friends of Durruti Group

Reviewed by Paul Z. Simons

*The Friends of Durruti Group: 1937-1939* by Agustín Guillamón, translated by Paul Sharkey (AK Press, POB 40682, San Francisco, CA 94140-0682; and POB 12766, Edinburgh, EH8 9YE, Scotland, 1996) 116pp. \$9.95 paper.

This book details the activities and theoretic of the "Friends of Durruti Group," an anarchist affinity group formed in the spring of 1937. The formation of the group represents the convergence of anarchist militants from the Durruti and Iron Columns (anarchist militias) opposed to militarization and the writings of Jaime Balus, an editor of the CNT newspaper *Solidaridad Obrera*, who wrote consistently against collaboration with the government, either Catalan or Republican.

The "Friends of Durruti Group" cast itself as returning to an anarchist purity that had been lost or was in the process of being jettisoned by the CNT leadership. This included wholesale participation in the government by such leading anarchist militants as Federica Montseny, García Oliver, Abad de Santillan, and Juan Pío among others. The militarization of the militias was at this time proceeding apace, with the loss of much of the anarchist organization of the militias in favor of traditional military structures.

The "Friends" maintained a newspaper, *El Amigo del Pueblo*, from which they polemized against the current that the revolution seemed to have drifted into. They also found themselves embroiled in the May Day events of 1937. The "Friends" worked closely with the POUM, during and after the May events.

Balus, the main theoretician of the group, developed a theory of anarchist revolution based on the "dictatorship of the proletariat" which he saw described as a revolutionary junta. The group throughout its short history also continued to demand a full leftward turn to the revolution. Including disbanding the political parties that had betrayed the workers, de-militarization of the militias, full socialization of the economy and so forth. Significantly, the Republic was moving under pressure from the Soviet Union and the internal bourgeoisie in the opposite direction.

Evidently many from the group made it into exile, including Balus, and there are some closing thoughts of his, written in France, from the journal *l'Espagne Nouvelle*.

This is an interesting history testifying in a small way to the incredible creativity and political confusion that gripped the anarchists once they found themselves effectively in control of Spain. When our time comes, we must do better.



## Ecofascism

Review by Paul Z. Simons

*Ecofascism: Lessons from the German Experience* by Janet Biehl and Peter Staudenmaier (AK Press, POB 40682, San Francisco, CA 94140-0682; and POB 12766, Edinburgh, EH8 9YE, Scotland, 1995) 73pp. \$7.00 paper.

This small book contains two essays. The first by Staudenmaier deals with the "Green" wing of the Nazi Party and the second by Biehl deals with ecological ideas in the new German Ultra-Right.

Of the two the former is clearly the better piece, Staudenmaier ties together an excellent lineage of ecological concepts as they developed in Germany during the nineteenth century, particularly as regards the peculiar chauvinistic naturalism. As an example, Ernst Moritz Arndt's 1815 article blasting creeping industrialism for its disregard for the forests and soil. Arndt is also one of the leading fanatics for the unification of the Fatherland. Arndt's pupil, Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl continues this drift, "We must save the forest, not only so that our ovens do not become cold in winter, but also so that the pulse of life of the people continues to beat warm and joyfully, so that Germany remains German," from his 1853 book *Field and Forest*. What is interesting in the essay is the fact that German unification was almost three decades off, so just exactly where was this political union he speaks of? Nowhere, and hence an indication of the essentially mystical character, both of Nature and State.

By the beginning of the twentieth century these ideas had combined with the concept of the völk in rightwing ideology giving rise to a chauvinist ecology. The thought of Martin Heidegger is mentioned here as an example of the symbiosis of these two ideas. Heidegger's constant theoretic regarding "authentic Being" and Nature are also mentioned as an adjunctive concept in the formulation.

This leads directly into environmentalism as espoused by the Nazi Party (NSDAP). Two basic influences (and men) are identified, one a Nazi ideologist Richard Walter Darré who held the post of Reich Peasant Leader and Minister of Agriculture. In these respective positions he sought to introduce organic farming on a massive scale in Germany and also the Eastern Provinces (Poland, Balkans, Ukraine, etc.).

The second, *Reichminister* Fritz Todt, was far more important and influential. Todt ran not only two ministries in Nazi Germany but also the huge quasi-governmental *Organization Todt*. Under his auspices virtually all planned industrialization from factories to the Autobahn were built with environmental concerns in mind. Significantly, Todt found an

ally in Rudolph Hess, and in 1933, after the Nazi seizure of power a vast array of environmental legislation was passed at the national, regional and local level.

What is essential in the history is the close relationship between proto-environmentalist ideas and fascism. This relationship is empirically established and raises a number of questions. The weakness of ecological concepts, insofar as they can be used to justify either domination or liberation, social or natural. The deep ecology debates of today in many ways turn on the same question, wherein ecologically based arguments are used to justify racist, neo-Malthusian conclusions. The use of Nature as a justification for human brutality, Social Darwinism, etc., is clearly where much of this thought leads.

The second essay by Biehl is much less interesting and simply runs down ultra-right parties in Germany and discusses each grouping's take on environmental issues. She also includes a brief confrontation between Bookchin and Rudolf Bahro, a wingnut associated with ecological causes in Europe, and evidently yet another individual with the temerity to question the infallibility of Pope Murray I.

A worthwhile book for those concerned with some of the ubiquitous chatter about the environment not grounded in at least some foundation of humanist theoretical construct.

## Hystories

Review by John Zerzan

*Hystories: Hysterical Epidemics and Modern Culture* by Elaine Showalter (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997). 244pp. \$24.95 hardcover.

In this very provocative contribution to social psychology, Showalter examines six syndromes of individual hysteria that became social epidemics in the 1990s: chronic fatigue syndrome, Gulf War syndrome, multiple personality disorder, recovered memory of sexual abuse, satanic ritual abuse, and alien abduction.

She sees these disorders or traumas as essentially cases of hysteria, which is to say that they have no physiological or physical basis. Given the very real suffering of people in any of these categories, her book has aroused considerable anger. Some feminists, for example, have accused Showalter not only of insensitivity, but of outright siding with oppression.

Her discussion of the nature of hysteria, however, raises key questions and implies a rare, critical approach to the genesis of the mounting immiseration among us. Unfortunately, the social dimension—the "modern

culture" part of her subtitle—is extremely underdeveloped.

About as far as she goes is to suggest, rather faintly, that if it is mostly women who people the six syndromes under discussion, they have much in common with male combat veterans who have suffered the hysteria of "shell shock." That common feature is powerlessness. Would it not then be fruitful to see these "hystories" as a kind of striving to break through the dominant powerlessness and denial that affects all of us?

Showalter concludes that "we are all hysterics." But to assert that it is a "universal" part of everyday life is to shy away from exploring various "whys" of a pathogenic society. The enormous amount of psychic suffering in the most developed societies should not be seen as a universal or natural given. Of course, it is harder to get a book published if it fundamentally questions one's society.

But the thesis of this book and the examination of the six syndromes is itself a helpful, stimulating beginning vis-à-vis thinking about our plight and our prospects.

## At Dusk

Review by Lawrence Jarach

*At Dusk: The Situationist Movement In Historical Perspective* by David Jacobs and Christopher Winks. (Not Bored! P.O. Box 1115, New York, NY 10009-9998) 86pp. \$5.00ppd. pamphlet.

I first read *At Dusk* back in '85 or '86, after I had trudged through the *Situationist International Anthology*. I even tried to read a few articles from the S.I. journal in the original French when I had a regular shift at Bound Together Books. If I remember correctly, trying to complete the French articles gave me a headache; the *Anthology* was easier—it only took me the better part of six months to complete. Taking on *At Dusk*, however, was an exercise in futility. The language is turgid: "In trying to revitalize the avant-gardist project, even while consciously aware of the previous inadequacies of such a project, the S.I. sought to realize a transcendent synthesis of the cultural and political traditions represented by the avant-garde, and the radical fusion attempted by the S.I.—involving a politicization of extremist culture and a totalization of extremist politics—was meant to signify a rupture with all 'specialized opposition.'"

Be that as it may, reading it for the second time proved to be easier, possibly due to my increased political vocabulary in the meantime. Some critiques the authors make, while not truly original, are still relevant. But even

though there are some gems in the pamphlet, the density of the prose raises the problem of accessibility.

But my main question is this: why has *Not Bored!* reprinted a document that was mostly relevant when it was originally published—23 years ago?! It would have been more interesting to take *At Dusk* as a starting point and provide an update of what's been going on in the situationist-influenced milieu over the last two decades. The scandal around Jacques Mesrine for example. Certainly Debord's capitulation to copyright law and the Gallimard publishing empire could have been fascinating topics to explore from a situationist perspective. Instead we have to endure two-page paragraphs, run-on sentences, and the irritation of consistently split infinitives. The reprints of this dated pamphlet may not be bored, but readers without the requisite situationist pedigree probably won't be so lucky.

## Workers' Control

Review by Lawrence Jarach

*The Tradition of Workers' Control* by Geoffrey Ostergaard (Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High St., London, E1 7QX, England, 1997) 154pp. £6.95 paper.

The author of this work about work was a professor of political science for 37 years. He was "Reader in Government" at Birmingham University, a position sort of like being a Dean or the Head of the Department. The biographical blurb on the back cover has this comment: "an odd title for an anarchist," but those with a more sophisticated understanding of career choices available to open anarchists should be more troubled by his Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship at U.C. Berkeley. Getting tenure as a professor is marginally questionable, but sucking up to the American ruling class—and getting the money!—now that's much more than merely "odd" for an anarchist. Yet we are then supposed to find this study of workers who own and control their workplaces a milestone in the history of anti-state/libertarian socialism. I, for one, am skeptical.

As a critique of Labour Party socialism (now totally defunct with the accession to power of Blair) the book is passable, especially with the understanding that Labour was never a force for anything other than the most conservative, timid form of socialism. In this respect it reminded me of the analyses

of U.S. foreign policy made by another tenured professor, Noam Chomsky: necessary, but not much of a political challenge.

Anyway, in case anyone interested in anarchist theory hadn't noticed, the trend lately has been to question the assumption of work itself, not just who controls the means of production. Like those who hold the old view of technology as some neutral phenomenon, Ostergaard takes the position that control of one's workplace is the rele-



Billboard revision by the California Department of Corrections

vant issue, not the question of whether or not wage labor should be abolished, or what sorts of production might be abolished in an anarchist society. These ideas may have been fresh and interesting between 1954 and 1962 (when the essays in the book were first published), but things have changed—for the better—in anarchist theory over the last 30 years or so. Our hopes for a positive future lie in improving our ideas and theories by studying and learning from the past, not by emulating the limitations of those who came before us.

Are You Now or Have You Ever Been A Member of the Illuminati?

## New World Order

Review by Paul Z. Simons

*In the Name of the New World Order: Manifestations of Decadent Powers in World Politics* by Amnon Reuveni (Temple Lodge, London, England, 1996) 148pp. no price listed, paper.

Personally I can never get enough of wild, outrageous conspiracy theories. The Kennedy Assassination, Area 51, the Bilderbergers, the Trilateral Commission, you

name it. Reuveni has come up with a totally different twist on the issue of the New World Order, tying it somehow into an Anglo-American/Vatican Axis that is in the process of throwing Eastern Europe into a permanent tail-spin in order to realize the triumph of Sorath, a spirit identified by Rudolph Steiner, the founder of, among other things, the Waldorf School.

The book opens with an exposition on the life of Averell Harriman, his induction into the

Yale secret society, Skull and Bones, and subsequent discussion of his diplomatic career. Particular attention is paid to his ambassadorship to the USSR during WWII and how he (and Stalin) set up the Cold War. Though the author doesn't outright say that Harriman is an agent of a small group of conspirators, it is implied throughout. I kept wondering, though, who else is in this thing? The links between Harriman, Bush and Clinton are illuminated including how Harriman may have chosen Clinton for the presidency.

The book then veers backward some fifty years to Cecil Rhodes and his plans to erect a Jesuitical society to run the world in the name of British hegemony, particularly the aristocratic British parliamentary system. Evidently the sole reason that Rhodes amassed his fortune was to ensure sufficient funding for this secret society (called "The Secret Society of Cecil Rhodes") and its goals. Ah, there's another Clinton link, Rhodes Scholar Clinton indoctrinated into the secret society and also...attending Georgetown.

Yep, the Vatican fits into the whole thing as well, including the naming of a non-Italian as pontiff after some 400 years, not just a non-Italian, but a Pole! Which feeds into the whole book's focus on Central Europe as a proving ground for the New World Order.

The book itself as I've tried to convey is a morass of veiled and hidden conspiratorial links that according to the author will lead to a struggle in Eastern and Central Europe between the Sun Spirit (Christ?) and the Sun Demon (Sorath? Nixon?). This showdown is in the offing and according to the author the bloodbath in Bosnia-Herzegovina, or Rwanda, or Chechnia is evidence of the triumph of Sorath, hiding behind the mask of patriotism.

So, kooks come in all shapes and sizes, and the author of this book lives in Switzerland, which is far enough away to maintain a certain comfort level. Though Cecil Rhodes visited Switzerland in 1893, and that corresponds to the centennial anniversary of Adam Weishaupt's failed attempt at world domination, wait... wait... which also means that JFK was in Dealey Plaza at the same time....



# Anarchist press review

Compiled by Jason McQuinn, Alex Trotter & Lawrence Jarach

and others. There is good, solid historical information in each issue which can't be found anywhere else. Send a contribution for a sample copy.

## COLLECTIVE ACTION NOTES

#13-14 [double issue]/1997 (POB 22962, Baltimore, MD 21203; email: cansv@gpc.apc.org) is a sophisticated, often highly-interesting, 28-page tabloid covering debates and actions of interest to the anti-statist, anticapitalist (anarchist/ultra-left) workers' resistance in a very readable format. This issue includes several reports on the Liverpool dock-workers' strike, an assessment of "After the 1995 Strikes: The Current Situation in France," accounts of recent class struggle in Canada, and a debate with Kamunist Kranti (India) "On Organization" (in which KK comes off looking more human). In general, these pieces are of much more interest than reading about the standard old & new leftist illusions concerning electoralism, social democracy, trade unions, nationalization, etc. still being produced by the remaining publications of the political left. Send \$7 or £7 for a 4-issue subscription.

**ANARCHIST AGE WEEKLY REVIEW**  
#269/Sept.29.97 (POB 20, Parkville, Victoria 3052, Australia) is a neatly-produced little 4-page weekly bulletin summarizing Australian & international news for libertarians down-under. This issue includes comment on the privatization of the New South Wales Electricity Commission. Subscriptions are \$50/50 issues or \$10/10 issues.

## A-INFO

#24/July-Oct.97 (Postbus 61523, 2506 AM Den Haag, Netherlands) is a 10-page bulletin with very short news items and coverage of actions, mostly from Europe. Included in this issue: neo-Nazi, antifascist activities, social benefits, squatters, and strikes. Send a contribution or trade.

**ANARCHIST AGE WEEKLY REVIEW**  
#269/Sept.29.97 (POB 20, Parkville, Victoria 3052, Australia) is a neatly-produced little 4-page weekly bulletin summarizing Australian & international news for libertarians down-under. This issue includes comment on the privatization of the New South Wales Electricity Commission. Subscriptions are \$50/50 issues or \$10/10 issues.

## ANY TIME NOW

**The Anarchist-Decentralist Newsletter**  
Vol.3.#1/Summer & #2/Autumn 97 (Affinity Place, Argenta, B.C. V0G 1B0, Canada) is a 12-page discussion zine focussing on libertarian and socialist themes. The Summer issue includes a piece titled "What is Anarchism?"—originally sparked by a statement from Noam Chomsky appearing in the March 1996 issue of *The Progressive* ("Right now I'd like to strengthen the federal government"). Subscriptions are \$1/issue.

## BAD BROADCAST

#16/April & #17/Oct.97 (Boston Anarchist Drinking Brigade, POB 381323, Cambridge, MA 02238-1323; email: brigadegroup@world.std.com) is a one-page broadside taking on a single issue with each effort, from an individualist anarchist perspective. Broadside #16 gives one "Anarchist Case against Gun Control." Broadside #17 covers "Privatization?—It Doesn't Go Far Enough! Send an SASE for a sample.

## BULLETIN OF THE

**KATE SHARPLEY LIBRARY**  
#11/1997 (KSL, BM Hurricane, London WC1N 3XX, England) is an 8-page newsletter "dedicated to countering the distortion and lies that pass for the history Anarchism" in order to "give the anarchist movement a true view of its origins." This issue provides information on a few unknown and little-known anarchists, including Jaime Balus (editor of the Friends of Durruti group's *El Amigo del Pueblo* in revolutionary Spain), Italian anarchist Luigi Fabbri

ways, ugly world of game farming, support for land and fishing rights of native peoples, review of the book *Ecoterror* by Ron Arnold. Subscriptions are \$25/year (\$35 outside U.S.A.) [AT]

**EARTH FIRST! ACTION UPDATE**  
#42/Sept.97 thru #45/Jan.98 (Dept.29, 1 Newton St, Manchester M1 1HW England) is a 6-page bulletin of direct action environmentalists in the UK reporting on eco-defense activities around the world. Issue #42 features an overview of "Affinity Groups." Issue #44 includes a short account of the serial trespassing of Rachel Vaneigem's important *The Revolution of Everyday Life*. Vol.58, issue #23 is better than average, including Colin Ward's reminiscence on Isaiah Berlin, a review of *African Anarchism*, Milan Rai (author of *Chomsky's Politics*) on Nepalese caste elitism, and Hartmut Heller's interesting account of "How a Hunter-Gatherer from the Hadzabe Peoples Met Contempt and Prejudice in Europe." The most recent issue features a write-up of "Chumbawamba's Triumph" about the successful eco-bucket-dunking Chumbawamba members gave deputy prime minister John Prescott), along with an appeal to "Lift economic sanctions; Don't bomb Iraq." Subscriptions are £18.00/year (24 issues).

## FIFTH ESTATE

#349/Summer & #350/Fall '97 (4632 Second Ave., Detroit, MI 48201) is a 32 to 36-page anti-civilization, anarcho-primitivist tabloid, consistently publishing some of the more intelligent writing in the radical milieu. The Summer issue covers the recent death of California Earth First! organizer & FBI(bombing victim) Judi Bari, the replacement of state capitalism with the corporate

capitalism in Russia, and some more (well-deserved) Murray Bookchin bashing. The fall issue includes Mitchell Cohen's theories on the causes of Gulf War Syndrome (radiation exposure and inoculation of troops with experimental drugs), David Watson's "Notes on the New Nomadism" (covering the contributions of pioneer ideology and the cowboy mystique to the destruction of the continent and the fragmentation of modern life), a couple "Conversations with Allen Ginsberg" (two FE interviews from 1969 & 1991), Allen Anfiloff on anarchism & art (in the work of Courbet, Zola & Proudhon), and another, longer piece by David Watson titled "Swamp Fever, Primitivism & the Ideological Vortex." In this latter piece Watson gives a decent overview of the recent ugly dispute between English Neoists (most notably Luther Blissett & Stewart Home) and the anarcho-primitivist activists grouped around the journal *Green Anarchist* (who seem to be more the victims of dishonest Neoist smears than anything else), before he attempts to clarify his own primitivist views by distancing himself from the writings of John Moore and then defending ecocriticism from charges that it has been closely related to historical fascist movements. Always recommended. Single copies are \$2; subscriptions are \$8/4 issues.

## DISCUSSION BULLETIN

#86/Nov.-Dec.97 thru #87/Jan.-Feb.98 (POB 1564, Grand Rapids, MI 49501) is a 32-page assortment of letters and reprinted articles primarily from the anti-market, non-statist radical milieu. Each issue usually includes several ongoing (and occasionally interesting) debates over the meanings of communism and Marxism. The Nov.-Dec. issue includes more reprints from other publications than usual, like "The Meaning of the United Parcel Strike" reprinted from *Internationalism*, along with a long letter from Pat Murtagh on leftism. The Jan.-Feb. issue includes the draft of a "Fight to Win" union strategy (which includes "exposing the role of the AFL-CIO") by Dave Stratman, and John Zerzan on "What is Anarchism?" Subscriptions are \$3/year (6 issues).

## EARTH FIRST!

Sept.-Oct.97 (POB 1415, Eugene, OR 97440; e-mail: earthfirst@igc.apc.org) "The Radical Environmental Journal," tabloid, 36pp. This issue: backlash against environmentalism, decline of Greenpeace, destructiveness of the Capital Beltway and NAFTA superhigh-

Street, London E1 7QX, England) is a long-running 8-page tabloid of anarchist news and comment, primarily focussing on all things British, but also taking on international social struggles as well. Vol.58, issue #16 includes anti-workfare pieces, and a long review of Brian Bamford's *The Tradition of Workers' Control: Selected Writings by Geoffrey Ostergaard*, along with a bizarre review of *Anarchy* magazine (giving almost no indication of the magazine's editorial perspective or contents, while complaining at length about the serial trespassing of Rachel Vaneigem's important *The Revolution of Everyday Life*). Vol.58, issue #23 is better than average, including Colin Ward's reminiscence on Isaiah Berlin, a review of *African Anarchism*, Milan Rai (author of *Chomsky's Politics*) on Nepalese caste elitism, and Hartmut Heller's interesting account of "How a Hunter-Gatherer from the Hadzabe Peoples Met Contempt and Prejudice in Europe." The most recent issue features a write-up of "Chumbawamba's Triumph" about the successful eco-bucket-dunking Chumbawamba members gave deputy prime minister John Prescott), along with an appeal to "Lift economic sanctions; Don't bomb Iraq." Subscriptions are £18.00/year (24 issues).

**GREEN ANARCHIST**  
#49:50/Autumn '97 (BCM1715, London WC1N 3XX, England) is an always interesting, 32-page eco-anarchist tabloid aiming "For the destruction of Civilization." Contents of this issue include "Smash Vivisection!," "Scenes from the Show Trial" (on the prosecution of GA editors last year for publishing direct action news), "Earth First!—A Movement Under Threat," "Earth First and Ecotascism," and Richard Heinberg's "Was Civilization a Mistake?" Each issue also includes a "Diary of Ecotascism," a "Diary of Animal Liberation," and a "Diary of Community Resistance" (despite the fact that GA editors were jailed for publishing precisely this type of information), as well as reviews, commentary and much more. All anarchists should show their solidarity with jailed GA editors by subscribing immediately! This zine is well worth the price at £5/5 issues.

**HARBINGER**  
Leaving the 20th Century (Crimethink, Far East, POB 13731, Salem, OR 97309; e-mail: crime.think@pobox.com) "Communiqué," tabloid, 12-pages, with situationist-inspired themes: Daily life, love, plagiarism, television, concealment of death. Also apparently has inexplicable affinity for Che Guevara and the Baader-Meinhof guerrillas. Free. [AT]

## HERE AND NOW

#18/Undated (POB 109 Leeds, West Yorkshire LS5 3AA, England; or, c/o Transmission Library, 28 King Street, Glasgow G1 5GP, Scotland) is a beautiful produced 48-page magazine which consistently features some of the best analysis and commentary coming out of the British Isles. This issue includes Peter Porcupine on "Watching Birds" (critique of the evolutionary psychology fad which ineptly seeks to explain all

animal and human behavior in terms of evolutionary adaptation). Douglas Campbell's witty, parable explaining the growth & future of the internet (titled "Something Nasty in the Basement"), Frank Dexter & John Barrett once again ably taking on the modern therapeutic state economy (from the "inner child" movement & "multiple personality disorder" to "recovered memory syndrome" and their common implication in the suppression of any human freedom & community which yet remains outside the realm of professional management), as well as John Barrett again on the hospice movement in an essay titled "Lost Rights." There are also a number of wickedly funny detoured posters from the "Zero Tolerance" campaign in Leeds against the bogeyman of 'male violence.' Especially considering the high quality of Dexter & Barrett's essay, this may well be the best issue yet. With its emphasis on the critique of managerialism, professionalism and bureaucratic ideologies, this journal remains a refreshing change from the usual reshuffles of leftism and moralism endemic in successful radical periodicals. All in all a delightful read. I can't recommend this too highly. The cover price is now £2 (add another £1 or £2 for postage); subscriptions are now £8.50/3 issues by surface mail (£10 by airmail).

## THE HOLY BIBLE

#9/Undated (515-916 West Broadway, Vancouver, B.C., V6Z 1K7, Canada) is an effective, humorous & healthy (though often bilious, as advertised) dose of corrosive critique aimed at all the forces which keep people in ignorance, especially religious! Issue #9 includes Dudley Manlove's "Am I a Fag?", along with Greg Simpton on "Forestry Practices in B.C.," and B.L.'s comic "What R. Crumb Means to Me." Sample copies are a great deal at \$2 postpaid. And there's also a Best-of compilation selections from issues #1 thru #7 available for \$2.

## INDUSTRIAL WORKER

Nov.97 (103 West Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti, MI 48197) "The voice of revolutionary unionism," tabloid, 12pp. Still waving the flag for the old-time industrial proletariat. News about strikes and labor organizing. Not as much fun as *Discussion Bulletin*. Sub: \$15/year. [AT]

## LIBERTARIAN LABOR REVIEW

#22/Winter '97 (POB 2824, Champlain, IL 61825) is a 48-page magazine of "Anarcho-syndicalist Ideas and Discussion." The Winter issue includes international news, an account of the proceeding of the first International Encuentro called by the Zapatistas (EZLN) in Chiapas in 1996, and Harold Beyer-Arnesen's analysis of the current situation of "Anarcho-Syndicalism: A Historical Closed Door...or Not?" Of special interest is Mike Hargis' "Notes on Anarchism in America, Part 2," in which he describes the most prominent of all the failed attempts since the '80s to impose a national or continental organizational face on the North American anarchist milieu. This is a magazine for those who believe there is still some life in the ideal of anarchist unions.

Subscriptions are still \$12/4 issues (2 years).

## LOVE & RAGE

Vol.8.#5/Nov.-Dec.97 (POB 853, Peter Stuyvesant Station, New York, NY 10009) is the 16-page left anarchist newspaper of the Love and Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation which includes members throughout North America and publishes a Spanish-language version from Mexico City. This issue features "Shutting Down Big Brown: The Anarchist Take on the UPS Strike," a "Public Cervix Announcement: Learn Self-Help Menstrual Extraction," news (from Italy, Kenya, Iran & Mexico), a review of Sam Mbah & I.E. Igarwey's new book *African Anarchism* by Bill Meyers, and much more. Subscriptions are \$9/5 issues.

## THE MATCH

#92/Winter '97-98 (POB 3012, Tucson, AZ 85702) is an irregularly-published 104-page anarchist journal, lovingly self-printed by the always cantankerous editor/publisher Fred Woodworth. The articles in this issue continue to focus on the rampant abuses heaped upon innocent people by authoritarian institutions, especially by cops, courts and prisons. But this issue also includes excerpts from the late Christian anarchist Ammon Hennacs's *The Book of Ammon*, along with Woodworth's assessment of his life and memoir. Also included are lots of reviews and a long letters column, along with increasingly paranoid responses from editor/publisher Woodworth. Subscriptions are well worth the \$10/4 issues (cash only if the often grouch tone of this zine doesn't put you off).

## MINUS TIDES!

Vol.9.#2/Winter '97-98 (POB 47, Denman Island, B.C., V0R 1T0, Canada) is a 32-page anarchish lit-zine, featuring fiction, poetry, opinion & graphic art. This issue features a center-spread titled "Puritans and Industrialists" on the latest hemp laws and marketing, and an anonymous bound-in pamphlet titled "First People's Spirituality and the Marketplace" (critical of the merchandising of native spirituality). Send \$3 for a sample copy.

## NOT BORED!

#28/Dec.97 (POB 1115, New York, NY 10009; e-mail: rose@thorn.net) is an always interesting, 70-page situationist zine, featuring "Decrees issued by the New York Psycho-geographical Association," editor Bill Brown's criticisms of Len Bracken's new Guy Debord biography, "On the Manifesto of the English Situationists," and translations of a number of short situationist texts, along with Pierre Guillaume's on "Debord's No price; send a trade or contribution.

## NOTES FROM THE BORDERLAND

Winter 97-98 (Larry O'Hara, BM Box 4769, London, WC1N 3XX, England) is Larry O'Hara's new 36-page magazine of "parapoletics...an examination of the hidden in politics, especially the machinations of the secret state." This first issue includes a piece on a bogus right-wing Catholic charity, "KKK UK—the Coming of the Pseudo Klans?," a long expose involving the New Commu-

nist Party the anti-fascist journal *Searchlight*. Subscriptions are £5/2 issues.

## PASSION BRIGADE NEWSLETTER

Embracing the Lesbian and Gay Freedom Movement  
#13 (LGFM, BM Box 207 London WC1N 3XX, England) is a 28pp. zine aiming to bring anarchic sexual liberation to lesbians, gays and bisexuals, and to make sexuality and the overthrow of patriarchy major campaigning issues for all anarchists." Topics covered in this issue include gun control, fox hunting, a review of Jeremy Seabrook's *Travels in the Skin Trade*, along with articles titled "How I Ended Up on the Streets," and "For the Sake of the Children." Send about \$2 or 3 for a sample copy; subscriptions are £10/year.

## PROFANE EXISTENCE

#34/Undated (POB 8722, Minneapolis, MN 55408) is a lightly produced, 40-page anarcho-punk zine. Coverage this time includes squats in Milan, anti-fascist demos, "Pro-Choice and Proud of It" by Minneapolis AFA, police brutality, a center-spread on the Swedish anarcho-syndicalist union SAC, plus plenty of band reviews & zine reviews. Sample copies are \$2; subscriptions are \$12 (six issues).

## RED & BLACK

#27/Autumn '97 (POB 12, Quamaa, N.S.W., 2550, Australia) is a long-running, 44-page anarchist journal. Articles this issue include a review of Ken Loach's important film *Land and Freedom*, Greg Mallory on the history of the IWW in Australia, and Rene Berthier on the Stalinist "May 1937 Counter Revolution" in Spain. Subscriptions are \$6/year.

## THE STATE ADVERSARY

#29/Winter '97 (POB 9263, Te Aro, Wellington, New Zealand) is a very readable 20-page quarterly of news and comment. This issue includes a survey of contemporary "Anarchism in Japan" by Matthew Turner, Toby Boraman's ideas on "Constructive Anarchism," and Sam Buchanan on "Why Capitalism Loves the State." Subscriptions are \$10/year.

## WILLFUL DISOBEDIENCE

#5/Nov.97 (Venomous Butterfly Publications, 828 Royal St., Apt. 605, New Orleans, LA 70016-3198) is an unapologetic zine of anarcho-rebellion aiming at amoral, anarchic insurrection. In other words, it's a delightful read in an age in which even most zinesters are afraid of their own unbribed desires, preferring to settle for cynical—and ultimately vacuous—poses of hip pseudo-rebellion. Venomous Butterfly Publications, on the contrary, always carry a small, but nasty bite. This issue features a critique of the evocation of meaning from the term "Direct Action" by those who insist on using it to describe activities that are more and more indirect, purely symbolic and ideologically nonviolent. Also included is a quick critique in passing of the ideological function of modern medicine, short accounts of genuine direct actions from around the world,

information on repression of anarchist activists in Europe, and a very good analysis titled "When is a Duck Not a Duck? or Bob Black After Snitching." Highly recommended. Send a 55c SASE or a contribution for a sample copy today!

Non-English-language materials received

## BRAND

*Anarkistisk Tidning sedan 1988*  
#3-4 & #5/1997 (Box 150 15, S-104 65 Stockholm, Sweden) is a lively, militant 32-page magazine documenting Swedish punk, anarcho-leftist, anti-fascist & autonomist actions and cultures. Double-issue #3/#4 includes a statement on anarchofeminism, and an analysis of neoliberalism & the New World Order, along with a call for a revolutionary "Global Intifada." Issue #5 includes news of two anti-porn/anti-brothel demos in Stockholm, along with analyses of right-wing/fascist political currents, the criminalization of radical left dissent in the European Union, and the Swedish animal rights movement. Subscriptions are 300kr (payable to Swedish Post Giro 478 24 80-0) of 6 issues.

## CNT

*Organ of the National Confederation of Labor*  
#228/Dec.97 (CJ Molinos 64, 18009 Granada, Spain) Monthly paper of the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist union. Lots of articles on labor struggles, an obituary of Vanzetti's sister Vincenza (who died last July), homeless people, and the announcement of a class for vegetarian cooking. In Spanish. 200 pesetas per issue, 5000 per year. [LJ]

## EKINTZA ZUZENA

#22 (Ediciones E.Z., Apto 235, 48080 Bilbo [Bizkaia] Spain) Articles on technologies of social control, how spectacular (in the situationist sense) terrorism is constructed, the history of Latin American patriots/militarism, and veganism. In Spanish and Euzkara (Basque). 350 pesetas per issue; 1400 pesetas/\$25.00 for a year. [LJ]

## KAOS/ASKO

#01/#4 undated (POB 15001-CEP 20031-120, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil) is a single sheet, Portuguese-language bulletin of the self-organized group "Autonomist consisting of Brazilian workers & students. Send a contribution for a sample. They ask that correspondents not use the magazine or group name when addressing envelopes.)

## LIBRECANA LIGILO

#91/Summer 97 (67 av. Gambetta, Paris 75020, France) Published in Sao Paulo and Paris, this is the journal of libertarian Esperanto enthusiasts. No price listed. [LJ]

## SOCIAL HARMONY

#12 & 13 (Athens, Greece) T.K. 17110, Nea Smirni, Athens, Greece) Kropotkin reprints, poetry, anti-militarism, and an analysis of Greek agriculture are featured in this 8-page free-zine. In Greek. No price listed. [LJ]

## SOLIDARIDAD OBRERA

*Organ of the Regional Confederation of Labor of Catalunya*  
#227/Dec.97 (Via Augusta 2, 08911 Badalona, Spain) Topics this time include analyses of the labor practices of Lewis and Nike, an examination of the philosophy of materialism, notices of imprisoned confederal members, and an article about a rural community's struggle against the hated Civil Guard. In Spanish. 100 pesetas. [LJ]

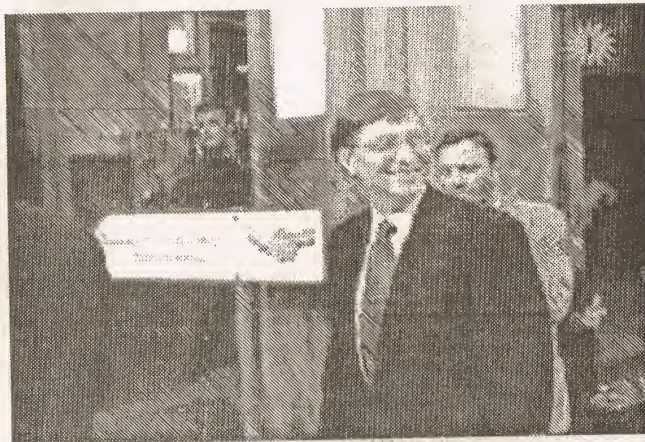


# Bill Gates gets a Pie in the Face

An Interview with Noel Godin by Hugues Henry

"Bill Gates, the Microsoft chairman, was hit in the face with a cream cake Wednesday in Brussels. He was entering a building to meet with Belgian government officials. The Belgian news agency says one person distracted Gates' attention, while another threw the cream tart. It hit Gates right in the face, leaving cream all over his glasses. The news agency says four to five people were involved and had a stack of cakes ready. The one person who threw a cake got away, but police arrested another person and are questioning a third who filmed the event. Reuters reported that it was unclear if Noel Godin, a Belgian who has made a name for himself and a lucrative business out of hurling custard pies in the faces of the rich and famous, was behind the incident."

-From the account in the Belgian newspaper *Nieuwsblad*.



When did you first pie someone?

In November 1969, with French writer Marguerite Duras, who represented for us the "empty" novel.

Why did you choose Bill Gates?

Because in a way he is the master of the world, and then because he's offering his intelligence, his sharpened imagination and his power to the governments and to the world as it is today—that is to say gloomy, unjust and nauseating. He could have been a utopist, but he prefers being the lackey of the establishment. His power is effective and bigger than that of the leaders of the governments, who are only many-colored servants. So Bill Gates was at the top of our lists of victims. The attack against him is symbolic; it's against hierarchical power itself. Our war cry was explicit: "Let's pie! Let's pie the polluting lolly!"

So you have a whole list of people you want to pie?

Yes, we have meetings here in my house. These are funny meetings; we have a good time with good drinks and have to study how to reach the target.

How did you prepare to pie Bill Gates?

For several years, there's been a new phe-

nomenon. Traitors appear in the entourage of our victims who contact us to give us firsthand information. Our victims, at first sight, are very unpleasant and they are far from being loved in their own circle; this is our trump. For instance, these last years, Patrick Poivre D'Arvor, [producer] Daniel Toscan du Plantier and [French minister] Nicolas Sarkozy have been betrayed. In the case of Bill Gates, a member of the staff of Microsoft Belgium contacted us and gave us a mysterious rendezvous. Thanks to him, the operation was a success. Of course we won't give his name. It's a secret; only a few know his identity. But we want to tell it because we would be very amused if there was suspicion in the staff of Microsoft. "Who's the traitor?"

It happened one week before the arrival of Bill Gates in Belgium. We received, little by little, very precise information about the planning of the visit. Some Parisian accomplices followed him the day before, step by step, notably when he first met Lionel Jospin [French prime minister]. For instance, we learned that he was always escorted by five armed bodyguards but no more. In Belgium, he had four motorcycle policemen and he had five important rendezvous that day. So, to succeed, we only had one solution: our number. We were 30 individuals. That's why we succeeded. We were extremely determined, we were in a good mood. We were a funny commando.

We were divided in "gloupinesques" [from his pseudonym, *Le Gloupier*] fighting units of

three on Arlon Street, where people were waiting for him in Le Concert Noble. There was traffic in the street so the plotters were anonymous. When Bill Gates arrived with screaming sirens, he walked outside his car and as he was climbing the steps several of

sleep very well the night before. We thought, since the bodyguards of Bill Gates are professional, they won't fire. I told my men, "Be happy and show it is only cream." To be strong, we drank some good Trappist beers. So they were laughing and joking when they



our fighting units gathered and they created a kind of pie whirl that fell on him. The bodyguards were completely distraught. None of them even took out his gun. They were as dazed as Bill was.

Do you know why there's a traitor in the staff of Microsoft Belgium? What were his motivations?

This man told us he really loved Bill Gates in the past, saying that he was very cool and passionate. But little by little he considered that his power had tainted him, and that he was becoming more and more haughty with his own collaborators. So the man who gave us the information considered, and he's not alone, that it wouldn't be bad to teach Bill a lesson, to bring him back to reality. That's how he explained to us why he was doing it. He's far from being a member of our band, he's not an anarchist and he likes his work with Microsoft, but he thought it had to happen.

So you weren't paid by someone from Netscape or Oracle?

Certainly not; I wasn't even aware of their existence.

Weren't you afraid of the armed bodyguards and the police?

This time, yes, we were afraid. We didn't

went to the front...Of course I wasn't in the commando because the authorities, the press...they know my face. It would have been a mistake, even with a disguise. So I was on an adjacent street.

How many pies were thrown?

Four touched Bill Gates in the face. There were 25 pies in all. One of the secrets of the gloupinesque operation is that you don't have to throw the pies. You must put the pies point-blank in the face of the victim. One of the members of the victorious commando is the filmmaker Remy Belvaux ("Man Bites Dog"). He unfortunately lost his papers and so the cops revealed his identity.

What were their feelings just the second after they touched Bill Gates with the pie?

The exhilaration of victory. Exquisite pleasure. The gloupinesque operations have a 95 percent success rate. But each time we are stressed, and each time it's the same pleasure.

How did Bill Gates react?

He had a kind of promotional smile that became a kind of smile made of sand...

When you touch your victim, don't you have the feeling of being powerful? You had pies, but it could have been a knife.

Yes, but this is not our problem. We are comical terrorists and the pie is symbolic. The victim is only injured in his self-esteem. We take a lot of care that the pies can't hurt physically. The pastry is soft and full of cream.

Do you cook the pies?

No, we are very lazy. We buy the pies in a shop nearby the place of the crime. This time, the pies where coming from a little shop called Au Petit Pain Frais, chaussee de Haecht.

Will Bill Gates pursue your commandos?

No, it would be catastrophic for him and his reputation.

If someone gave you money to pie his enemy, would you accept it?

We have never been pie mercenaries. But we've had several offers of a good amount of money. For instance, I had an offer to pie Catherine Deneuve in Cannes and also Sharon Stone. I refused. I love Catherine Deneuve and the movies of Jacques Demy; and that year Sharon Stone was in a western I really liked. So I had nothing against her. We are pie pirates. But if we receive money when we pie someone, we are not puritan leftists. We received money once: in the case of [famous French singer and actor] Patrick Bruel. We offered the money to the anarchist Parisian magazine *Mordicus*. So if someone wants to give us money we won't misuse it. I could really enjoy life if I could earn much money doing this job! It's a big game and we have fun together. We want to live fast and to laugh as much as we can. We want to transform our lives just like Oscar Wilde wanted to. Everything is awful around us, so let's try to have fun.

If Bill Gates had to come back in a few months in Belgium, would pie him again?

We shall see. But we declare war on all the governments of the world, on Tony Blair, on Bill Clinton, on the pope...When the pope last came to Belgium, if we'd had a traitor sponsoring us, we'd have pied him. We had a strategy. For us, the pope is a dangerous serial killer because he is against contraception, birth control. On our blacklist, you will also find Demi Moore, Tom Cruise and John Travolta—who are both members of the Scientology, Billy Graham. On the other hand, we have more and more sympathizers everywhere. We had thousands of propositions to help us, even abroad. We also have many enemies. But we are like the characters of cartoons. We are like Laurel & Hardy, Bugs Bunny, the Marx Brothers, the Yippies of May, 1968.





Collage by James Koehnline

Learning from stateless societies

# Anthropology and Anarchism

Brian Morris

There is, in many ways an "elective affinity" between anthropology and anarchism. Although anthropology's subject matter has been diverse, and its conspectus rather broad—as a study of human culture, historically it has always had a rather specific focus—on the study of pre-state societies. But it is quite misleading to portray the anthropology of the past as being simply the study of so-called "primitive" people or the "exotic" other, and thus largely engaged in a kind of "salvage" operation of "disappearing" cultures. This is a rather biased and inaccurate portrait of anthropology, for the discipline has a long tradition of "anthropology at home," and many important anthropological studies have their location in India, China and Japan. It is thus noteworthy that James Clifford and George Marcus (1986) in what many have regarded as the founding text of literary or post-modern anthropology, are not only rather dismissive of feminist anthropology, but ignore entirely the ethnographic studies of non-"Western" scholars—Srinivas, Kenyatta, Fei and Aiyappan. But in an important sense anthropology is the social science discipline that has put a focal emphasis on those kinds of societies that have been seen as exemplars of anarchy, a society without a state. Indeed, Evans-Pritchard, in his classic study of *The Nuer* (1940), described their political system as "ordered anarchy." Harold Barclay's useful and perceptive little book *People without government* (1992) is significantly subtitled "The Anthropology of Anarchism," and Barclay makes the familiar distinction between anarchy, which is an ordered society without government, and anarchism, which is a political movement and tradition that became articulated during the 19th century.

**Anthropologists & anarchism: Reclus, Bougle, Mauss, Radcliffe-Brown**

Many anthropologists have had affinities with anarchism. One of the earliest ethnographic texts was a book by Elie Reclus called *Primitive Folk*. It was published in 1903, and carries the sub-title "Studies in Corporative Ethnology." It is based on information derived from the writings of travellers and missionaries, and it has the evolutionary flavour of books written at the end of the 19th century, but it contains lucid and sympathetic accounts of such people as the Apaches, Nayers, Todas and Inuits. Reclus declares the moral and intellectual equality of these cultures with that of "so-called civilised states", and it is of interest that Reclus used the now familiar term Inuit, which means "people," rather than the French term Eskimo. Elie Reclus was the elder brother, and lifetime associate, of Elisée, the more famous anarchist geographer.

Another French anthropologist with anarchist sympathies was Celestin Bougle, who wrote not only a classical study of the Indian caste system (1908)—which had a profound influence on Louis Dumont—but also an important study of Proudhon. Bougle was one of the first to affirm, then (1911) controversially, that Proudhon was a sociological thinker of standing. There was in fact a close relationship between the French sociological tradition, focussed around Durkheim, and both socialism and anarchism, even though Durkheim himself was antagonistic to the anarchist stress on the individual. Durkheim was a kind of guild socialist, but his nephew Marcel Mauss wrote a classical study on *The Gift* (1925) which focussed on reciprocal or gift exchange among



pre-literate cultures. This small text is not only in some ways an anarchist tract, but it is one of the foundation texts of anthropology, one read by every budding anthropologist. British anthropologists have less connection with anarchism, but it is worth noting that one of the so-called "fathers" of British anthropology, A.R. Radcliffe-Brown was an anarchist in his early years.

Alfred Brown was a lad from Birmingham. He managed, with the help of his brother, to get to Oxford University. There two influences were important to him. One was the process philosopher Alfred Whitehead, whose organismic theory had a deep influence on Radcliffe-Brown. The other was Kropotkin, whose writings he imbibed. In his student days at Oxford Radcliffe-Brown was known as "Anarchy Brown." Alas! Oxford got to him. He later became something of an intellectual aristocrat, and changed his name to the hyphenated "A.R. Radcliffe-Brown." But, as Tim Ingold has written (1986), Radcliffe-Brown's writings are permeated with a sense that social life is a process, although like most Durkheimian functionalists he tended to play down issues relating to conflict, power and history.

Although anarchism has had a minimal influence on anthropology—though many influential anthropologists can be described as radical liberals and socialists (like Boas, Radin, and Diamond), anarchist writers have drawn extensively on the work of anthropologists. Indeed there is a real contrast between anarchists and Marxists with respect to anthropology, for while anarchists have critically engaged themselves with ethnographic studies, Marxist attitudes to anthropology have usually been dismissive. In this respect Marxists have abandoned the broad historical and ethnographic interests of Marx and Engels. The famous study of Engels on *The origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884) is, of course, based almost entirely on Lewis Morgan's anthropological study of *Ancient Society* (1877). If one examines the writings of all the classical Marxists—Lenin, Trotsky, Gramsci, Lukacs—they are distinguished by a wholly Eurocentric perspective, and a complete disregard for anthropology. The entry under "Anthropology" in *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought* (Bottomore, 1983), significantly has nothing to report between Marx and Engels in the 19th century, and the arrival on the scene of French Marxist anthropologists in the 1970s (Godelier, Meillassoux). Equally amazing is that one Marxist text, specifically on *Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production* (Hindness and Hirst, 1975), not only suggested that the "objects" of theoretical discourses did not exist—and so rejected history as a worthwhile subject of study, but completely bypassed anthropological knowledge. This is matched of course by the dismissive attitude towards anarchism by Marxist scholars—Perry Anderson, Wallerstein and E.P. Thompson are examples.

### Anarchists & Anthropology: Kropotkin, Bookchin, Clastres, Zerzan

Kropotkin is well known. But being a geographer as well as an anarchist, and having travelled widely in Asia, Kropotkin had wide ethnographic interests. This is most clearly expressed in his classic text *Mutual Aid* published in 1903. In this book Kropotkin attempted to show that both organic and social life was not an arena where laissez-faire competition

and conflict and the "survival of the fittest" was the only norm, but rather these domains were characterized by "mutuality" and "symbiosis." It was the ecological dimension of Darwin's thought, expressed in the last chapter of *On the Origin of Species*, that was crucial for Kropotkin; co-operation not struggle was the important factor in the evolutionary process. This is exemplified by the ubiquitous lichen, one of the most basic forms of life and found practically everywhere.

Kropotkin's book gives lengthy accounts of mutual aid not only among hunter-gatherers and such people as the Buryat and Kabyle (now well-known through Bourdieu's writings), but also in the medieval city and in contemporary European societies. In a A.S.A. monograph on socialism (edited by Chris Hann, 1993) two articles specifically examine anarchy among contemporary people. Alan Barnard looks at the issues of "primitive communism" and "mutual aid" among the Kalahari hunter-gatherers, while Joanna Overing discusses "anarchy and collectivism" among the horticultural Piaroa of Venezuela. Barnard's essay has the sub-title "Kropotkin visits the Bushmen," indicating that anarchism is still a live issue among some anthropologists.

Kropotkin was concerned to examine the "creative genius" of people living at what he described as the "clan period" of human history, and the development of institutions of mutual aid. But this did not entail the repudiation of individual self-assertion, and, unlike many contemporary anthropologists, Kropotkin made a distinction between individuality and self-affirmation, and individualism.

Murray Bookchin is a controversial figure. His advocacy of citizen's councils and municipal self management, his emphasis on the city as a potential ecological community, and his strident critiques of the misanthropy and eco-mysticism of the deep ecologists are perhaps well known, and the centre of many debates—much of it acrimonious. But Bookchin's process-oriented dialectical approach and his sense of history—alive to the achievements of the human spirit—inevitably led Bookchin to draw on anthropological studies. The main influences on his work were Paul Radin and Dorothy Lee, both sensitive scholars of native American culture. In his *The Ecology of Freedom* (1982), Bookchin devotes a chapter to what he describes as "organic society," emphasizing the important features of early human tribal society: a primordial equality and the absence of coercive and dominating values, a feeling of unity between the individual and the kin community, a sense of communal property and an emphasis on mutual aid and usufruct rights, and a relationship with the natural world which is one of reciprocal harmony rather than of domination. But Bookchin is concerned that we draw lessons from the past, and learn from the culture of pre-literate people, rather than romanticising the life of hunter-gatherers. Still less, that we should try to emulate them.

Pierre Clastres was both an anarchist and an anthropologist. His minor classic, on the Indian communities of South America—specifically the forest Guayaki (Ache)—is significantly titled *Society Against the State* (1977). Like Tom Paine and the early anarchists, Clastres makes a clear distinction between society, as a pattern of social relations, and the state, and argues that the essence of what he describes as "archaic" societies—whether hunter-gatherers or horticultural (neolithic) peoples—is that effective means are institutionalized



Peter Kropotkin, author of *Mutual Aid*.

to prevent power being separated from social life. He bewails the fact that western political philosophy is unable to see power except in terms of "hierarchized and authoritarian relations of command and obedience," (p.9) and thus equates power with coercive power. Reviewing the ethnographic literature of the people of South America—apart from the Inca State—Clastres argues that they were distinguished by their "sense of democracy and taste for equality," and that even local chiefs lacked coercive power. What constituted the basic fabric of archaic society, according to Clastres, was exchange, coercive power, in essence, being a negation of reciprocity. He contends that the aggressiveness of tribal

communities has been grossly exaggerated, and that a subsistence economy did not imply an endless struggle against starvation, for in normal circumstances there was an abundance and variety of things to eat. Such communities were essentially egalitarian, and people had a high degree of control over their own lives and work activities. But the decisive "break" for Clastres, between "archaic" and "historical" societies was not the neolithic revolution and the advent of agriculture, but the "political revolution" involving the intensification of agriculture and the emergence of the state.

The key points of Clastres' analysis have recently been



affirmed by John Gledhill (1994, pp.13-15). It provides a valuable critique of western political theory which identifies power with coercive authority; and it suggests looking at history less in terms of typologies than as a process in which human activities have maintained their own autonomy and resisted the centralizing intrusions and exploitation inherent in the state.

While for Clastres and Bookchin political domination and hierarchy begin with the intensification of agriculture, and the rise of the state, for John Zerzan the domestication of plants and animals heralds the demise of an era when humans lived an authentic, free life. Agriculture, per se, is a form of alienation; it implies a loss of contact with the world of nature and a controlling mentality. The advent of agriculture thus entails the "end of innocence" and the demise of the "golden age" as humans left the "Garden of Eden," though Eden is identified not with a garden but with hunter-gathering existence. Given this advocacy of "primitivism," it is hardly surprising that Zerzan (1988, 1994) draws on anthropological data to validate his claims, and to portray hunter-gatherers as egalitarian, authentic, and as the "most successful and enduring adaptation ever achieved by humankind" (1988, p.66). Even symbolic culture and the shamanism associated with hunter-gatherers is seen by Zerzan as implying an orientation to manipulate and control nature or other humans. Zerzan presents an apocalyptic, even a gnostic vision. Our hunter-gatherer past is described as an idyllic era of virtue and authentic living. The last eight thousand years or so of human history—after the fall (agriculture)—is seen as one of tyranny, hierarchical control, mechanized routine devoid of any spontaneity, and as involving the anesthetization of the senses. All those products of the human creative imagination—farming, art, philosophy, technology, science, urban living, symbolic culture—are viewed negatively by Zerzan—in a monolithic sense. The future we are told is "primitive." How this is to be achieved in a world that presently sustains almost six billion people (for evidence suggests that the hunter-gatherer lifestyle is only able to support 1 or 2 people per sq. mile), or whether the "future primitive" actually entails, in gnostic fashion, a return not to the godhead, but to hunter-gathering subsistence, Zerzan does not tell us. While radical ecologists glorify the golden age of peasant agriculture, Zerzan follows the likes of Van Der Post in extolling hunter-gatherer existence—with a selective culling of the anthropological literature. Whether such "illusory images of Green primitivism" are, in themselves, symptomatic of the estrangement of affluent urban dwellers and intellectuals, from the natural (and human) world—as both Bookchin (1995) and Ray Ellen (1986) suggest—I will leave others to judge.

## Reflections on anarchism

The term anarchy comes from the Greek, and essentially means "no ruler." Anarchists are people who reject all forms of government or coercive authority, all forms of hierarchy and domination. They are therefore opposed to what the Mexican anarchist Flores Magon called the "sombre trinity"—state, capital and the church. Anarchists are thus opposed to both capitalism and to the state, as well as to all forms of religious authority. But anarchists also seek to

establish or bring about by varying means, a condition of anarchy, that is, a decentralized society without coercive institutions, a society organized through a federation of voluntary associations. Contemporary right-wing "libertarians," like Milton Friedman, Rothbard and Ayn Rand, who are often described as "anarchocapitalists," and who fervently defend capitalism, are not in any real sense anarchists.

In an important sense anarchists support the rallying cry of the French revolution: liberty, equality and fraternity—and strongly believe that these values are inter-dependent. As Bakunin remarked: "Freedom without socialism is privilege and injustice; and socialism without freedom is slavery and brutality." Needless to say anarchists have always been critical of soviet communism, and the most powerful and penetrating critiques of Marx, Marxist-Leninism, and the Soviet regime have come from anarchists: people like Berkman, Goldman, and Maximoff. The latter's work was significantly entitled: *The Guillotine at Work* (1940). Maximoff saw the politics of Lenin and Trotsky as similar to that of the Jacobins in the French revolution, and equally reactionary.

With the collapse of the Soviet regime, Marxists are now in a state of intellectual disarray, and are floundering around looking for a safe political anchorage. They seem to gravitate either towards Hayek or towards Keynes; whichever way their socialism gets lost in the process. Conservative writers like Roger Scruton take great pleasure in berating Marxists for having closed their eyes to the realities of the Soviet regime: they themselves, however, have a myopia when it comes to capitalism. The poverty, famine, sickening social inequalities, political repression and ecological degradation that is generated under capitalism is always underplayed by apologists like Scruton and Fukuyama. They see these as simply "problems" that need to be overcome—not as intrinsically related to capitalism itself.

Anarchism can be looked at in two ways.

On the one hand it can be seen as a kind of "river," as Peter Marshall describes it in his excellent history of anarchism. It can thus be seen as a "libertarian impulse" or as an "anarchist sensibility" that has existed throughout human history: an impulse that has expressed itself in various ways—in the writings of Lao Tzu and the Taoists, in classical Greek thought, in the mutuality of kin-based societies, in the ethos of various religious sects, in such agrarian movements as the Diggers in England and the Zapatistas of Mexico, in the collectives that sprang up during the Spanish civil war, and—currently—in the ideas expressed in the ecology and feminist movements. Anarchist tendencies seem to have expressed themselves in all religious movements, even in Islam. One Islamic sect, the Najadat, believed that "power belongs only to god." They therefore felt that they did not really need an imam or caliph, but could organize themselves mutually to ensure justice. Many years ago I wrote an article on Lao Tzu, suggesting that the famous *Tao Te Ching* ("The Way and its Power," as Waley translates it) should not be seen as a mystical religious tract (as it is normally understood), but rather as a political treatise. It is, in fact, the first anarchist tract. For the underlying philosophy of the *Tao Te Ching* is fundamentally anarchist, as Rudolf Rocker long ago noted.

On the other hand anarchism may be seen as a historical movement and political theory that had its beginnings at the end of the 18th century. It was expressed in the writings of

William Godwin, who wrote the classic anarchist text *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1798), as well as in the actions of the sans-culottes and the enragés during the French revolution, and by radicals like Thomas Spence and William Blake in Britain. The term "anarchist" was first used during the French revolution as a term of abuse in describing the sans-culottes—"without breeches"—the working people of France who during the revolution advocated the abolition of government.

Anarchism, as a social movement, developed during the 19th century. Its basic social philosophy was formulated by the Russian revolutionary Michael Bakunin. It was the outcome of his clashes with Karl Marx and his followers—who advocated a statist road to socialism—during meetings of the International Working Men's Association in the 1860s. In its classical form, therefore, as it was expressed by Kropotkin, Goldman, Reclus and Malatesta, anarchism was a significant part of the socialist movement in the years before the first World War, but its socialism was libertarian not Marxist. The tendency of writers like David Pepper (1996) to create a dichotomy between socialism and anarchism is, I think, both conceptually and historically misleading.

## Misconceptions of anarchism

Of all political philosophies anarchism has had perhaps the worst press. It has been ignored, maligned, ridiculed, abused, misunderstood, and misrepresented by writers from all sides of the political spectrum—Marxists, liberals, democrats and conservatives. Theodore Roosevelt, the American president, described anarchism as a "crime against the whole human race"—and it has been variously judged as destructive, violent and nihilistic. A number of criticisms have been lodged against anarchism, and I will deal briefly with eight.

1. It is said that anarchists are too innocent, too naive, and have too rosy a picture of human nature. It is said that, like Rousseau, they have a romantic view of human nature which they see as essentially good and peace-loving. But of course real humans are not like this; they are cruel and aggressive and selfish, and so anarchy is just a pipe dream. It is an unrealistic vision of a past golden age that never really existed. This being so, some form of coercive authority is

always necessary. The truth is that anarchists do not follow Rousseau. In fact, Bakunin was scathing in his criticisms of the 18th century philosopher. Most anarchists tend to think humans have both good and bad tendencies. If they did think humans all goodness and light, would they mind being ruled? It is because they have a realistic rather than a romantic view

of human nature, that they oppose all forms of coercive authority. In essence, anarchists oppose all power which the French describe as "puissance"—"power over" (rather than "pouvoir," the power to do something), and believe—like Lord Acton—that power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. As Paul Goodman wrote: "...the issue is not whether people are 'good enough' for a particular type of society; rather it is a matter of developing the kind of social institutions that are most conducive to expanding the potentialities we have for intelligence, grace, sociability and freedom."

2. Anarchy, it is believed, is a synonym for chaos and disorder. This is, in fact, how people often use the term. But anarchy, as understood by most anarchists, means the exact opposite of this. It means a society based on order. Anarchy means not chaos, or a lack

of organisation, but a society based on the autonomy of the individual, on co-operation, one without rulers or coercive authority. As Proudhon put it: liberty is the mother of order. But equally anarchists do not denounce chaos, for they see chaos and disorder as having inherent potentiality—as Bakunin put it: to destroy is a creative act.

3. Another equation made is that between anarchism and violence. Anarchism, it is said, is all about terrorist bombs and violence. And there is a book currently in the bookshops entitled *The Anarchists' Cookbook* all about how to make bombs and dynamite. But as Alexander Berkman wrote: the resort to violence against oppression or to obtain certain political objectives has been practiced throughout human history. Acts of violence have been committed by the followers of every political and religious creed: nationalists, liberals, socialists, feminists, republicans, monarchists, Buddhists, Muslims, Christians, democrats, conservatives, fascists...and every government is based on organized violence. Anarchists who have resorted to violence are no worse than anybody else. But most anarchists have been against violence and terrorism, and there has always been a strong link between anarchism and pacifism. Yet anarchists go one step further:



they challenge the violence that most people do not recognize and which is often of the worst possible kind; this is lawful violence.

4. Anarchists have been accused, especially by Marxists, of being theoretical blockheads, of being anti-intellectual, or of making a cult of mindless action. But as a perusal of the anarchist movement will indicate, many anarchists or people with anarchist sympathies have been among the finest intellects of their generations, truly creative people. Moreover, anarchists have produced many seminal texts outlining their own philosophy and their own social doctrines. These are generally free of the jargon and the pretension that passes as scholarship amongst many liberal scholars, Marxists and post-modernists.

5. Another criticism is the opposite of this: it ridicules anarchism for being apolitical, and a doctrine of inaction. Anarchists, according to the ex-doyen of the Green Party in Britain, Jonathan Porritt, do nothing but contemplate their navels. Because they do not engage in party politics, he even suggests that anarchists do not live in the "real world." All the essential themes of the Green Party manifesto—the call for a society that is decentralized, equitable, ecological,

co-operative, with flexible institutions—are of course simply an unacknowledged appropriation of what anarchists like Kropotkin had long ago advocated—but with Porritt this vision is simply hitched to party politics. As a media figure Porritt completely misunderstands what anarchism—and a decentralized society—is all about. Anarchism is not non-political. Nor does it advocate a retreat into prayer, self-indulgence or meditation, whether or not one contemplates one's navel or chants mantras. It is simply hostile to parliamentary or party politics. The only democracy it thinks valid, is participatory democracy, and considers putting an X on a piece of paper every four or five years is a sham. It serves only to give ideological justification to power holders in a society that is fundamentally hierarchical and undemocratic. Anarchists are of many kinds. They have therefore suggested various ways of challenging and transforming the present system of violence and inequality—through communes, passive resistance, syndicalism, municipal democracy, insurrection, direct action and education. One of the reasons why some anarchists have put a lot of emphasis on publishing propaganda and education, is that they have always eschewed

party organization as well as violence. Anarchists have always been critical of the notion of a vanguard party, seeing it as inevitably leading to some form of despotism. And with regard to both the French and Russian revolutions history has proved their premonitions correct.

6. A consistent critique of anarchism offered by Marxists is that it is utopian and romantic, a peasant or petty-bourgeois ideology, or an expression of millennial dreams. Concrete historical studies by John Hart on anarchism and the Mexican working class (1978) and by Jerome Mintz on the anarchists of Casas Viejas in Spain (1982) have more than adequately refuted some of the distortions about anarchism. The anarchist movement has not been confined to peasants: it has flourished among urban workers where anarcho-syndicalism developed. Nor is it utopian or millennial. Anarchists have established real collectives, and have always been critical of religion. Nobody among the early anarchists expected some immediate or cataclysmic change to occur through "propaganda by deed" or the "general strike"—as the writings of Reclus and Berkman attest. They realised it would be a long haul.

7. Another criticism of anarchism is that it has a narrow view of politics: that it sees the state as the fount of all evil, ignoring other aspects of social and economic life. This is a misrepresentation of anarchism. It partly derives from the way anarchism has been defined, and partly because Marxist historians have tried to exclude anarchism from the broader socialist movement. But when one examines the writings of classical anarchists like Kropotkin, Goldman, Malatesta and Tolstoy, as well as the character of anarchist movements in such places as Italy, Mexico, Spain and France, it is clearly evident that it has never had this limited vision. It has always challenged all forms of authority and exploitation, and has been equally critical of capitalism and religion as it has of the state. Most anarchists were feminists, and many spoke out against racism, as well as defending the freedom of children. A cultural and ecological critique of capitalism has always been an important dimension of anarchist writings. This is why the writings of Tolstoy, Reclus and Kropotkin still have contemporary relevance.

8. A final criticism of anarchism is that it is unrealistic; anarchy will never work. The market socialist David Miller expresses this view very well in his book on *Anarchism*

(1984). His attitude to anarchism is one of heads I win, tails you lose. He admits that communities based on anarcho-communist principles have existed, and "given a chance" have had some degree of "unexpected success." But due to lack of popular support and state intervention and repression they have, he writes, always been "failures." On the other hand he also argues that societies could not exist anyway without some form of centralized government. Miller seems oblivious

to the fact that what Stanley Diamond called "kin-communities" have long existed within and often in opposition to state systems, and that trading networks have existed throughout history, even among hunter-gatherers, without any state control. The state, in any case, is a recent historical phenomena, and in its modern nation-state form has only existed for a few hundred years. Human communities have long existed without central or coercive authority. Whether a complex technological society is possible without centralized authority is not a question easily answered; neither is it one that can be lightly dismissed. Many anarchists believe that such a society is possible, though technology will have to be on a "human scale." Complex systems exist in nature without there being any controlling mechanism. Indeed, many global theorists nowadays are beginning to contemplate libertarian social vistas that become possible in an age of computer technology. Needless to say, if Miller had applied the same criteria by which he so adversely adjudges anarchism—distributive justice and social well-being—to capitalism and state "communism" then perhaps he would have declared both these systems unpractical and unrealistic too? But at least Miller wants to rescue anarchism from the dustbin of history—to help us to curb abuses of power, and to keep alive the possibilities of free social relationships.

Society, we are told, by such authorities as Friedrich Hayek, Margaret Thatcher, and Marilyn Strathern, either does not exist, or it is a "confused category" that ought to be excised from theoretical discourse. The word derives, of course, from the Latin, *Societas*, which in turn derives from *Socius*, meaning a companion, a friend, a relationship between people, a shared activity. Anarchists have thus always drawn a clear distinction between society, in this sense, and the state: between what the Jewish existentialist scholar Martin Buber called the "political" and the "social" principles. Buber was a close friend of the anarchist Gustav

Landauer, and what Landauer basically argued—long before Foucault—was that the state could not be destroyed by revolution: it could only be undermined—by developing other kinds of relationships, by actualizing social patterns and forms of organization that involved mutuality and free co-operation. Such a social domain is always in a sense present, imminent in contemporary society, co-existing with the state. For Landauer, as for Colin Ward, anarchy, there-

fore, is not something that only existed long ago before the rise of the state, or exists now only among people like the Nharo or Piaroa living at the margins of capitalism. Nor is it simply a speculative vision of some future society: but rather, anarchy is a form of social life which organizes itself without the resort to coercive authority. It is always in existence—albeit often buried and unrecognized beneath the weight of capitalism and the

state. It is like "a seed beneath the snow," as Colin Ward (1973) graphically puts it. Anarchy, then, is simply the idea, to stay with the same writer, "that it is possible and desirable for society to organize itself without government."

## References

- Barclay, H. *People without Government* (London: Kahn & Averill, 1982).
- Bookchin, M. *The Ecology of Freedom* (Palo Alto: Cheshire Books, 1982).
- Re-enchanting Humanity* (London: Cassell, 1995).
- Bottomore, T. (Ed) *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983).
- Clastres, P. *Society Against the State* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1977).
- Clifford, J. and G. Marcus, (Ed) *Writing Culture* (Berkeley: Univ. California Press, 1986).
- Ellen, R.F. "What Black Elk Left Unsaid," *Anthrop. Today* 216; pp.8-12, 1986.
- Gledhill, J. *Power and its Disguises* (London: Pluto, 1994).
- Hart, J.M. *Anarchism and the Mexican Working Class 1860-1931* (Austin: Univ. of Texas, 1978).
- Hann, C.M. *Socialism* (London: Routledge, 1993).
- Hindness, B. and Hirst, P.O. *Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975).
- Ingold, T. *Evolution and Social Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1986).
- Miller, D. *Anarchism* (London: Pent, 1984).
- Mintz, J.R. *The Anarchists of Casas Viejas* (Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press, 1982).
- Pepper, D. *Modern Environmentalism* (London: Routledge, 1996).
- Ward, C. *Anarchy in Action* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1973).
- Zerzan, J. *Elements of Refusal* (Seattle: Left Bank Books, 1988).
- Future Primitive and Other Essays* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia/Columbia: Anarchy, 1994).







Spanish Revolution:  
C.N.T. workers with  
gun captured during  
street fighting in  
July, 1936.



# Anarchist Culture: Everyday Life in the Spanish Revolution

An Interview with  
Manolo Gonzalez-Barandiaran

In previous issues of *Anarchy* (#35 and following) Manolo Gonzalez-Barandiaran has already recounted key chapters of his early "Life in Revolutionary Barcelona" from 1936 through 1939, including the death of family friend & militia leader Buenaventura Durruí, Manolo's early experiences in a libertarian school, and his participation in the Barcelona "May Days" struggle between the anarchists and the statist Communists in 1937. In this interview Jason McQuinn follows up on some of the topics hinted at in Manolo's biographical/historical essays.

See page 83 to order back issues containing Manolo's previous writings, appearing in *Anarchy* #35, #36, #38 & #39.

**Jason McQuinn:** I want to ask you about your perceptions of what anarchist culture was like in Catalonia during the Spanish Revolution and before. And even in exile if you were in contact with very many anarchists. In your essays you've talked about your education and the kinds of things you were interested in learning, and that there was a great emphasis on reading the classics when you were a child. Can you talk more about the education in general that you and other anarchists had?

**Manolo Gonzalez-Barandiaran:** You may remember that most of the Catalan anarchists, especially in Barcelona, were completely under the conception of the Ferrer Schools, the *Escuela Moderna*. So the idea was that young people—instead of accumulating facts—what they should have is a universal education based on the classics. So that they can transmit the culture that has been captured by the bourgeoisie, and the workers never get to enjoy, except for the trash capitalism produces.

Our function—and everybody wanted this, the *Escuela Moderna* and the *Universidad Popular* intended to educate the workers, to bring to them the beauty, the elegance, the dignity of other workers. Picasso was an anarchist. Pablo Casals was an anarchist. Jean Miro was. Many people

considered that some of the great movies were from an anarchist perspective. And everybody was supposed to read the classics, the great social novels like *The Toilers of the Sea*, or *Germinal*. But interesting things, because we could also read Jules Verne. So by the time we finished, people of 12 to 15 years old, they had a tremendous background in anything that was beautiful and elegant. We discussed the aesthetics of the movies for example—Chaplin versus the common popular culture, for example—jazz versus the foxtrot, Ellington and Stravinsky. I mean these were kids, you know.

So you got to see things like Jean Renoir's films...?

Right, *Boudu*, *Saved from the Water*, anarchist movies....

Did you read things like translations of Rousseau's *Émile*?

Right. *Émile* was the basis of the concept that children were born free. Society corrupts them. But that's not necessarily true, because if you have a good society, there is no such thing. And then, of course, there was an enormous emphasis—as you remember, there was a big struggle—for contraception and the fight against venereal disease. There was no way to take care of syphilis. So there was a great emphasis on health.

And this was in the *Escuela Moderna*?

In the *Escuela Moderna* and *L'Universidad Popular*.

Besides those two kinds of institutions weren't there also workers' centers?

*L'Universidad Popular* was a workers' center. And they were called *Tallers*, workshops, the same name as the factories. *Tallers d'Arte*, *Tallers de Musica*, *Tallers Para Aprender como*



CNT fishworkers line up to vote in 1936.

*Leer y Escribir*. Because you had to learn how to read and write....That is an idea that comes not necessarily from the Spanish anarchists, I think it comes from the autonomists of French anarchism.

I'm also curious, when I was in Spain in 1977, there were lots of *Ateneos*.

*Ateneos* were something that probably in American culture existed only in the late 1800s. People went to attend a lecture of a prominent intellectual.

Most of those in the meantime, since the seventies, were closed down.

Right, because with television and radio you don't need to go to hear Noam Chomsky. But without TV you had to go to the *Ateneo* and he presents his points of view in a cultural setting.

During the revolution there was at least some control of radio stations by anarchists in Barcelona. Was there anarchist programming?

Most of the anarchist programs were based, first to pass on the idea—I don't know if you remember this—about the "8-8-8." That is, a good, decent human being, how he divides the day: 8 hours of work (that was a big battle, you know, in Chicago), 8 hours of sleep, and 8 hours of vacation. So in the way of communication coming from the schools to the stu-

dents, there was always this mysterious "8-8-8" to remind everybody that there has to be 8 hours of study or 8 hours of work, and 8 hours of sleeping, and just leisure time.

And on the radio, for instance, usually there were the communiques of war saying this and that, and a little bit of maligning against the Communists and the incompetence of the bourgeoisie. For instance, [the Communists] might mention "family values." That was incredible! We despised this concept of family.

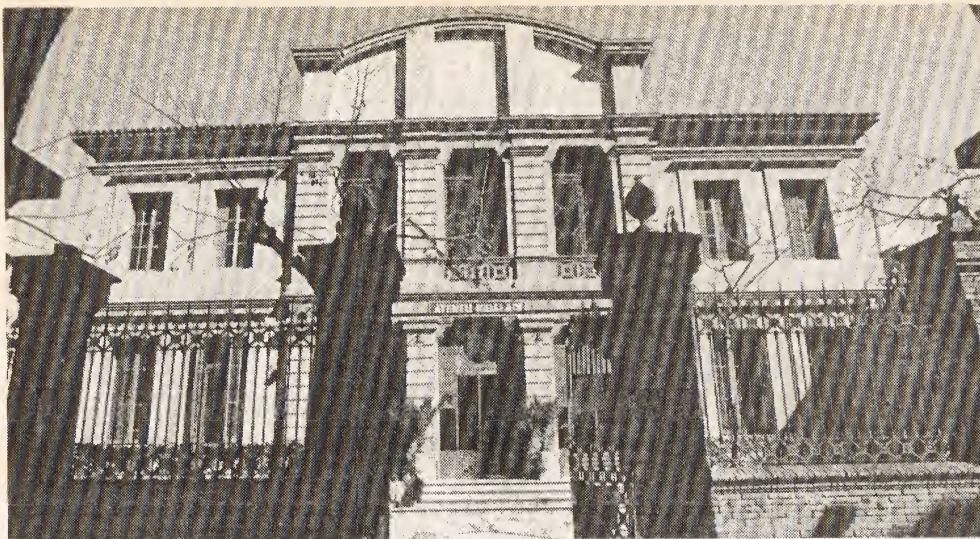
The anarchists used to put on great classical plays like *Hamlet*, and present Polonius as a completely bourgeois imbecile. And his famous advice to the people about being true to thyself—oh, the pettiness, selfishness, egotistical attitude of the French and Spanish bourgeoisie. Universally, you see, they don't give nothing. "Be true to thyself." How am I going to recreate myself, to create a better life, to change? All those things were studied. Of course, music, jazz....

And there were workers' orchestras....

Two public orchestras. One was run by Pablo Casals and the other one was run by the family, the parents of Jose Carreras, the classical tenor. And his father was in exile and refused a job because during the civil war he was one of the musicians who participated in the performances on radio for the workers and for the public in general. *Solidaridad Obrera*, the newspaper, "La Soli".

Did they read articles from *Solidaridad Obrera* on the radio,





La Escuela Libre (Ferrer School) organized as a cultural center (Ateneo).

and articles from other anarchist magazines?

Yes, and *La Batalla* of the POUM.

That was included?

*La Batalla* was included always. And international and regional news. And then there was something else, few people know this, that Orwell used to be a frequent presenter of points of view directed to London and to the international community. Before he almost got killed in 1937, because there was a specific order to murder him by the Communists because he was in the militia in the POUM after the May days. It was actually the British who saved him, the British Consul. In the first glimpses of his *Homage de Catalonia*, his very well known book, he says "I don't know what has happened." But there were murders of people, who disappeared in the clandestine jails of the Communists. For instance, the head of the POUM, Andrés Nin, many others, the Libertarian Youth, Juventud Libertaria, were assassinated not only the streets, but they took them to clandestine cemeteries and murdered them. [One family] was murdered in the middle of a downtown street. So all these things were accumulating, and pretty soon there was the Black Terror, the Republican Terror, the Red Terror, all ganged up against the POUM, the anarchists, and other legal groups, and anti-Stalinist communist groups.

So were there also any independent anarchist groups that weren't connected with the CNT or the FAI?

There were vegetarians, there were nudists, yoga, ethical vegetarians. All these things were in the milieu of the

anarchists. There was contention concerning the richness of Spanish food: the mandatory beef and pork and sausage. All these things were looked down on by these ethical people who said we have wonderful vegetables, we have wonderful rice, and why we don't need the typical diet. Included in the groups were the Esperanto people. And the great vegetarian restaurants where the culture included goddesses and the gods. Everyone was concerned with Madame Blavatsky and the Theosophical Society, and reading *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. All these things were not in the capitalist, bourgeois scene, of course not.

In the U.S. another term for atheists is freethinkers, and that seems to be a little wider than just denial of religion or God.

Because you realize something, too, that the anarchists and the radical bourgeoisie reacted against the government and the church with extreme contempt, because the church was very brutal against them. Divorce, abortion, the boring classrooms, you see photos of the little bishops with their fascist salutes—all big, fat pigs, you know...There were all these jokes, and the fact that dozens, perhaps hundreds of priests and nuns left the church to be with the anarchists.

Did they adopt a kind of austere, ethical lifestyle when they were with the anarchists? Did they consider themselves anarchists?

No. For instance the Quakers, they came to the help of the Republic, but they came to Barcelona first of any other place. You'd see quakers in Barcelona and Aragon. Seldom Madrid, because the Quakers were kind of scared of the guns, and of

course, the fascists.

Were some of the ex-nuns and priests influenced by Dorothy Day's Catholic Worker movement in the U.S.?

I don't know exactly. I certainly know that many of the people who became atheistic were so because of the atheistic principles of the anarchists, including what Kropotkin and Bakunin said about the church. And Proudhon.

The ex-nuns and ex-priests, did they become atheists? Or did they continue to be Catholic, but outside of the hierarchy?

They continued to be Catholic. No Pope, no authority, but at the same time, take away the divinity of Jesus, and see Jesus as a political revolutionary who was murdered by the Jewish establishment in collaboration with the Roman Empire. And that's easy to say, you know. That's true, you see in the trial, Jesus is accused of being more or less—like today, communists or anarchists are against the state—against polite society. It's blasphemous how he dares to attack the money-lenders. All these things that today sound to us as rather normal, in those times, no. And the nuns and priests, say let's bring back Jesus to the real, historical Jesus, not the namby-pamby idiot that's being portrayed by the Catholic Church.

So they became anti-authoritarian Catholics?

Absolutely, which is a tradition that has existed since the time of the Diggers. Because, you know, people like Blake, he was an anarchist. He was deeply religious. Gustave Doré did magnificent illustrations for the *Divina Commedia* with all these mystical.... But Doré was a far out anarchist, together with many of the impressionists. The impressionists were all anarchists, with the exception of two. Manet, Cézanne, Pissarro were anarchists. And these things translated into the cultures of resistance. They take the production of our workers and pay them miserable salaries and the anarchists, contrary to the Communists, were more angry about the rip-off of culture.

And the anarchists thought that everyone should organize their own education and organize their own autonomous culture....

Down with school, down with any authoritarian education! Ferrer was not the first one [to criticize authoritarian schooling]. I suppose that many people read *Émile*, they read Plato, and an educated person is not a person who has been



Part of the Durruti Column leaving Barcelona to help in Madrid late in July after defeating the fascists in Catalonia.

trained like a dog. You can train a dog. You cannot educate a dog. A dog can learn to bark, and this and that. But never will a dog express an aesthetic feeling coming from humanity.

So the Universidad Popular, would that be set up so that anyone who was there could start their own group to pursue some subject? Was anything....

Anything. Anything was fair game. Of course, the heavy concentration was in the drama of everyday life—salaries, ownership, surplus value. That was a big subject. How it was done was explained. The bourgeois put this kind of capital into this kind of factories and paid his workers, and in one year he would get back all his money. And then all the rest is nothing but profit. And the same with landlords, the land. The viciousness of the evictions of itinerant worker. It was one of those classical contradictions. You kick them out of the land. They become itinerant, vicious and revolutionaries. And they go from town to town. That was the reason when the revolution came, it was so vicious. The anarchists, and even the Communists, there were hundreds, thousands of murders of landowners, bourgeois. You know how the feelings were of a young couple when they knew that in Spain there was still the Law of the Seigniors, the right to spend the first night [with wives after marriages]....



That still existed in some places?

Where the landlords commanded the little towns, and with the priests. It was absolutely exercised all the time. And there were jokes, and the priest says, oh well, they should be so happy that the lord comes and fucks them. That explains, for instance, if you read that carefully in Hemingway, when the people murdered the bourgeoisie with whips. Well that was nothing. Women were the most violent. I heard of cases not only of killing, but first castration.

Were the landlords' and priests' families killed, too?

Yes, entire families. They escaped so fast at that time, that probably was one of the greatest influences after the civil war. The landowners learned their lessons. Under Franco there were lots of laws passed that eliminated the rights of the Seigneur. Civil courts took up the problems of the itinerant workers.

And what about the destruction of the churches in the revolutionary areas? Were they all destroyed?

No. They only destroyed the ones that were really called the centers of ignorance. The Maldiciones d'España Curas, the curse of the Spanish priests.

I'm curious, too, what anarchists thought of Moorish culture, of Islamic science and civilization? And the influence that it had on Spanish peninsula?

Passion. Passion about the glory of the libraries! We cursed the Spanish kings and the expulsion of the Jews. Because it was Spanish ignorance. The stupidity of the Spanish, because they kicked out the intellectuals. They kicked out the flower of the Jewish intelligentsia: the doctors, the professionals, the one's who bring authentic national culture, with a bunch of ignorant priests, middle class bourgeoisie, narrow-minded....

Was there some experimentation, too, among anarchists with Islam and Sufism?

The fact is that, for instance, an enormous number of the new poets paid homage to the poetry of the Moorish civilization. Garcia Lorca. Any poet, the first thing they thought was the glory of Spain when the Jews and the Moors were there. And of course, anarchists picked that up fast, with their anti-clericalism.

Was there also any interest among anarchists in the Islamic heresies among the fringe sects?

There was an enormous amount of study of the period after the death of Jesus, and the transformation of Judaism, and the Pharisees...These were very carefully studied. You remember about Masada, the last place where the Jews fought? And even now the army of Israel, that's where they swear their loyalty to the state of Israel. That was very much appreciated by anarchists, the militants, the warriors. We die, but we don't surrender. We die because the Romans don't have anything to do with us. We are strong in our conviction;

we believe in God. Self-immolation, you know. We, out of spite, spit into the face of the enemy. All of this Romanticism, was in a certain way, both the Romanticism of the French translated into political ideas, challenged the machismo of Spain. All these things were the milieu. And to be 12 years old and live in this society where there is [this sentiment], to die for the people, you know, to serve the people....

Amongst anarchists, was there any attempt to encourage independence in Morocco?

The anarchists during the war were terrorized by mercenaries. They were terrific troops. The front lines of Franco's forces were the Moorish troops. Some good anarchists said "Listen, offer them their freedom, give them independence. And if we give them independence then they won't fight here." And the Communists and the Republicans said, "Oh, no. We cannot dismember the glory of Spain." This was the same garbage that came from Franco, you know. "Oh, Fernando, Isabella! The Reconquista! Fighting against the Moors." Well, perhaps, if we just had given independence to the Moors, perhaps those mercenaries would have wakened up. They were fabulous troops, cruel, but great fighters.

What was the attitude of the anarchists towards the Native Americans in North and South America. Did they feel any sympathy with the Spanish conquest in South and Central America?

There was a lot of romanticism of that. For instance, on May the 1st the children were supposed to go to demonstrations dressed like their favorite heroes. Many dressed like Jacobins and revolutionaries, but my father got me—I don't know where—an American Indian costume, with Tomahawk and big feathers, and everything. So I was walking around like that.

The conquest of Latin America was looked down upon. It was imperialism, the concept of Eurocentrism. It was much despised by the anarchists. Who says that the conquistadors were heroes? For instance, I remember discovering the Chinese classics, the *Art of War* and poetry and the *I Ching*. I was eleven years old and I was playing with the *I Ching*.

You go to class early in the morning. You have to be there at 7 o'clock, because what is today's *I Ching*? You have to study the hexagrams. You know, it was a place of joy! We wanted to go to school. Let's go and study the *I Ching*, or sex education, or the great navigators, who managed to navigate under the stars. Who was Genghis Khan? And it was a good education. When the little bourgeois children came to us—because there weren't many parochial schools left in Barcelona so they had to come to our schools, these children got a cultural shock, such that sometimes their parents removed them. Because sometimes their children came home talking about the *I Ching*, freedom, women should have the right to abortion, contraception is important because you must be careful with sex. You cannot say that in a Catholic family. And they embraced fascism and said, "Those God damn anarchists, look what they teach our children." And all these Catholics, and the mentality of the bourgeoisie, the rigidity in France and Spain and Italy, the stupidity, you know. Well, the anarchist children would say, "We don't buy that shit."



CNT women rally for women's rights.

So you'd go to school each day, and it would be an adventure each day?

Almost every day, because the children planned the lessons for each day. We would go to visit a factory to learn about the workers. Sometimes we'd just have a good time! For instance, I remember, there was an enormous amount of discussions silent movies vs. talkies. And the purists would say, "Oh, the art, the beauty, the elegance of silent movies. That's art." The corruption of money-making. And some of us would say, "No. C'mon." I mean there were great shorts of Jazz, you know. They used to be called Ray's records and Ray's movies dedicated only to the black people. They came to Spain and we saw that.

Since there were workers' orchestras, were there any anarchist musicians who would play jazz or blues?

Oh, yeah. Even today that is the center of jazz in Europe, Barcelona. And we have something else that few people remember, Django Reinhardt, the guitar player, a very, very famous jazz musician. His partner, Stefan Grapelli still plays here. He was in the civil war, he was very young, and he toured with Stefan Grapelli. We wanted them. We needed them. Even now, I don't know why, jazz is big in Barcelona!

When you were in school, did you ever visit the offices of *Solidaridad Obrera*?

Yes, we visited to see how a paper is put together. We went to radio stations, too. How a machine gun is put together. How you shoot with a pistol and rifle. We went to the rifle range.

So you went to a rifle range. Did the children get to shoot?

The girls were enormously self-righteous, you know, the girls should shoot first. It was a little patronizing. But the girls would go home and say, "Mom, today I learned how to shoot a pistol!" And some of the mothers were saying, "But we're pacifist anarchists! Let's have a conference, you know. And they'd go to the Escuela Libre and say, "I don't want my child learning how to shoot a pistol!"

Were there anarchists who were against work? All work, or just industrial work?

Some said, let's revive the little industry, the home industry, which is very romantic. You cannot sustain a family making pots at home, or textiles. But still there was this intention to do it. Gandhi was very popular. Everybody said, "Long live Gandhi. He's in a perilous fight and he makes his own clothes." You must have the idea that in Barcelona and the Aragon, 75% of the population were connected to anarchism in one way or another. Maybe the old workers didn't agree with the

anarchists, but certainly they agreed with freedom. You know they were ethical vegetarians, and they agreed with the privilege to do whatever they pleased. *To live a hundred years*, that was an anarchist magazine. When they closed, they went to Chile.

Politics in the thirties was very complicated. Orgasm. It may sound ridiculous, but anarchists dedicated time to discuss orgasm. The women would say, "Hey, how come he comes now?" The woman would say, "Well, the orgasm is not vaginal." These discussions were important. We were so involved because the Communists were murdering us. But these were big discussions. Because feminism. You read, probably, an enormous amount of feminism. There was a lot of feminism in the anarchist movement.

This was the beginning of the *Mujeres Libres*, then?

Yes, with the *Mujeres Libres*, orgasm was for discussion. And a woman would say she had the right to choose a partner who would love her in such a way that I can have the ecstasy from love that I want. That was the reason the nuns joined the CNT, because they found these intelligent workers who were reading about sexuality in popular magazines on how to please a woman. Now that today, sounds kind of funny, but in those times it was an issue. You know, I read about women today, and they talk about orgasms, how you do this. And that's perfectly human and it's perfectly political, because all the feminists today talk about the politics of love, Simone de Beauvoir, and the politics of the bed, you know Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, it reads like an anarchist treatise about love.

Was there also a discussion of homosexuality, then?

Absolutely, and that was pow, pow, pow, machismo. Some of the anarchists were a little bit puritanical. But still they have



a right to live, too. And that was something that was hard because of the children. It was hard because the children hurt so much about bestiality and all the curses of the Bible, and you shall not lay with another man." It was too much in the Spanish tradition, because they preached for centuries. There were great lesbians in favor of the Republic. The British women, you know, some of them were openly gay. You'd see these rather masculine women, saying "Viva la Republica! Long live Anarchism! Down with Fascism!" And they would go to Madrid to the front, and you know there was this tradition, and they would shoot their guns against the fascists, you know. Revolutionary tourism.

#### Were there any anarchist groups of homosexuals?

You know the triangle? That was invented by the anarchists. It was a sign of pride. The Germans got it from the Spanish Civil War, it was a sign of shame. But for the anarchists it was a sign of pride. I was a little too young, and a little uninformed, but what I think that in this movement among free-thinkers, there was an enormous amount of concern for the rights of homosexual people. For instance, you know that Gregorio Marinon, and serious scientists were the first to say, homosexuality among mammals is very extended. Apes have it, whales have it. What's wrong with men, it's biological. To think that today, we've come to accept chemistry. It has nothing to do with morality. It has nothing to do with choice. It has nothing to do with predetermination; it's biological. Because all mammals have homosexual relationships. And there was a very famous man who became a laughingstock because he discovered that he had gone to some place were apes were pansexual. Mothers, children, daughters, and was saying what is happening with this pansexualism. There is no war, no violence, people just instead of shooting they fuck. Well this, coming to Spain, with the Catholics, the Communists, they said those degenerates of the anarchists, pansexuals, what are they talking about? And the anarchists, too, they said, don't say that, don't say it so loud. It was bad for public relations, you know. And there were some people who said women's rights, but at the same time they said, well there are certain things that have to be discrete. They demanded discretion. There was homosexuality in Barcelona, they lived a beautiful, excellent life.

#### So there was a gay subculture? Were there places for women to get together?

Yes. There was a place that was very, very famous. It's called the Four Cats...The Four Cats was a center for education and discussion, aesthetics, a place where Picasso and Jean Miro learned. Women were not accepted there. Come the revolution, a couple of powerful women came along with guns and machine guns. They knocked on the door and said we're going to be here, too.

#### What percentage of anarchists were pacifists?

I'd say twenty or thirty percent.

#### Of the rest of the anarchists, did most of them carry guns during the revolution?



Federica Montseny, CNT Minister of Health

Yes, yes, all the time. Because we were afraid. We were afraid of the enemy within, the Communists, the enemy outside, the Fascists, and then there still was the fascist bourgeoisie, the Fifth Column, and the priests. So there was a little paranoia.

#### Before the revolution, did most anarchists carry weapons?

Oh yeah, especially after the Republic some people took pleasure in murdering anarchists. After the revolution in Casa Viejas in 1934 everybody carried a little gun. There were big arsenals of weapons, you know, machine guns and bombs that were hidden away.

#### Did children sometimes carry weapons?

You were supposed to be instructed. You could be an observer. They taught you how to observe the movement of the troops and how to pass communications. The children were in charge of passing communications. You're very small, you can run. The other place for the anarchist child was to carry ammunition. It was difficult. Many kids were blown up, but it was an honor. It was an honor in the Juventud Libertaria. It was an honor to carry grenades.

The anarchists were a little idiotic sometimes, you know. They went to the battle front with this idea that a man never fights on his knees, a man fights standing up. And the same thing was in the street fights. The children were so enamored of novels and romanticism, that the little battalions of children with the black flag were singing "Long Live Anarchism" or the Internationale. It was very easy to get these kids to carry the bullets and the ammunition, and that was the reason when the communists and the government under the Republic captured Barcelona, they said the anarchists were murderers of children.

#### What was considered the age of maturity for a man or a woman at that time?

They followed the classical seven by three. Seven years is the age to begin inquiring, at fourteen years you become an adolescent. At twenty-one you become a man. With women, it was the age of procreation. Women were accepted as women at the age of fourteen or sixteen.

#### What was the common age for kids to become sexually active?

There was an enormous amount of ethical preaching, saying you can have a liaison with a young woman, but you must have reasonable security that you are clean, if you want to have a baby. So that was a reason that they called us a bunch of corrupt people, because we taught the children to use condoms imported from France. Everyone in Europe knows that everything that's made in France is dirty. The British think that. The Scandinavians think that. The Germans, certainly. And, of course, the bourgeoisie of Spain. So their children were taught total, absolute abstinence. Once the children knew how, and it was permissible, it was acceptable. What flourished was romance—holding hands, because it was accepted. You had a girlfriend, jealousy, possessiveness, and the girls would say "He is mine. Now don't you come and take him away from me." That's one of the things that I wrote about in my book. We had fantastic, marvelous love affairs. Total purity. Children that read poetry to one another. It's very difficult to understand that. That was the culture of all the anarchists.

#### At what age did people began having free unions and start living together?

Women at fourteen, men at sixteen. This made the anarchists very, very angry. This is the reason they called us the proletariat, because we have only one function which is to procreate, to have children. The curse of the Bible, to procreate and multiply. And the anarchists were very much opposed. Contraception, contraception. Let these women, have some sexual responsibility. Enjoy life before they start being encumbered by the burden of children. Not enough food, not enough money.

#### So the anarchists thought that men and women should wait until their twenties to have children, so that they could become more autonomous?

The autonomy of women was probably one of the worst fears in the propaganda of the Communists and the fascists, because of the prejudice against women. And at the same time a bigger thing, the sexual fear of women, that women can have sex at any time, and that men must prepare themselves. All these things were very seriously discussed. The anarchists were teaching women to have many lovers, to be promiscuous.

#### Amongst anarchists, what was the attitude towards prostitution and pornography?

The need to educate them. Prostitutes were victims of social exploitation. They have pimps, and there is no difference between a woman pimped by the owner of a factory, and a

prostitute pimped by a chulo. This is politics, this is strictly political. So they were taking prostitutes and teaching them how to read and write, to give them a profession. That was the attitude, you know. We needed to rescue the women because they were victims of male exploitation of the capitalist system. And everybody was very concerned, reading Rosa Luxemburg, because she is the one who talks about these things.

#### What was the attitude towards pornography?

Most of the people, especially the anarchists, admired French pornography from the sixteenth or the seventeenth century, which later on became the great romantic paintings. With the girls swinging, and her lover looking on. And with the French pornography, with the women, you can usually see her vagina, and the man has an erection. But there was great appreciation. It was beautiful art, very elegant. For instance, the great classic Greek studies. This was part of the Mediterranean culture, so we admired it very much. We admired Greece very much, all the pornographic art. This pornography was passed freely, you know. Some of the people and some of the teachers from the Escuela Ferrer, if you take a child's right away to see dirty pictures, well, you'd have an insurrection on your hands. And then after everyone's seen it, and they lost interest, they'd say, let's go back to the classics, you know. Pornography was not really a pejorative thing. What was despised deeply and profoundly were motion pictures where in the final episode the girl is taken to bed. What happened to art, nobility, war, revolution? All these important things, that's the reason everybody admires the elegance of Chaplin and his relationship with women. You know, they wink and made fun of the policemen and the fat bourgeois. And the bum gets the girl.

#### Was there an appreciation of Chaplin's tramp character, and of hobo culture in the US?

Yes, *Bodou* by Renoir; Chaplin was exactly the romantic, the one who brought flowers to the girl. He doesn't have any money, but the girls would choose him, better the policeman, better than the rich bourgeois.

#### Is there any tradition in Spain among anarchists of traveling around?

Yes, they use the Argentine word "liniera." That means the professional hobo. A man who has total, complete freedom. He'll get his food from begging, asking. He was very mystical, but very political. There was great admiration for the beggars of Buddhism.

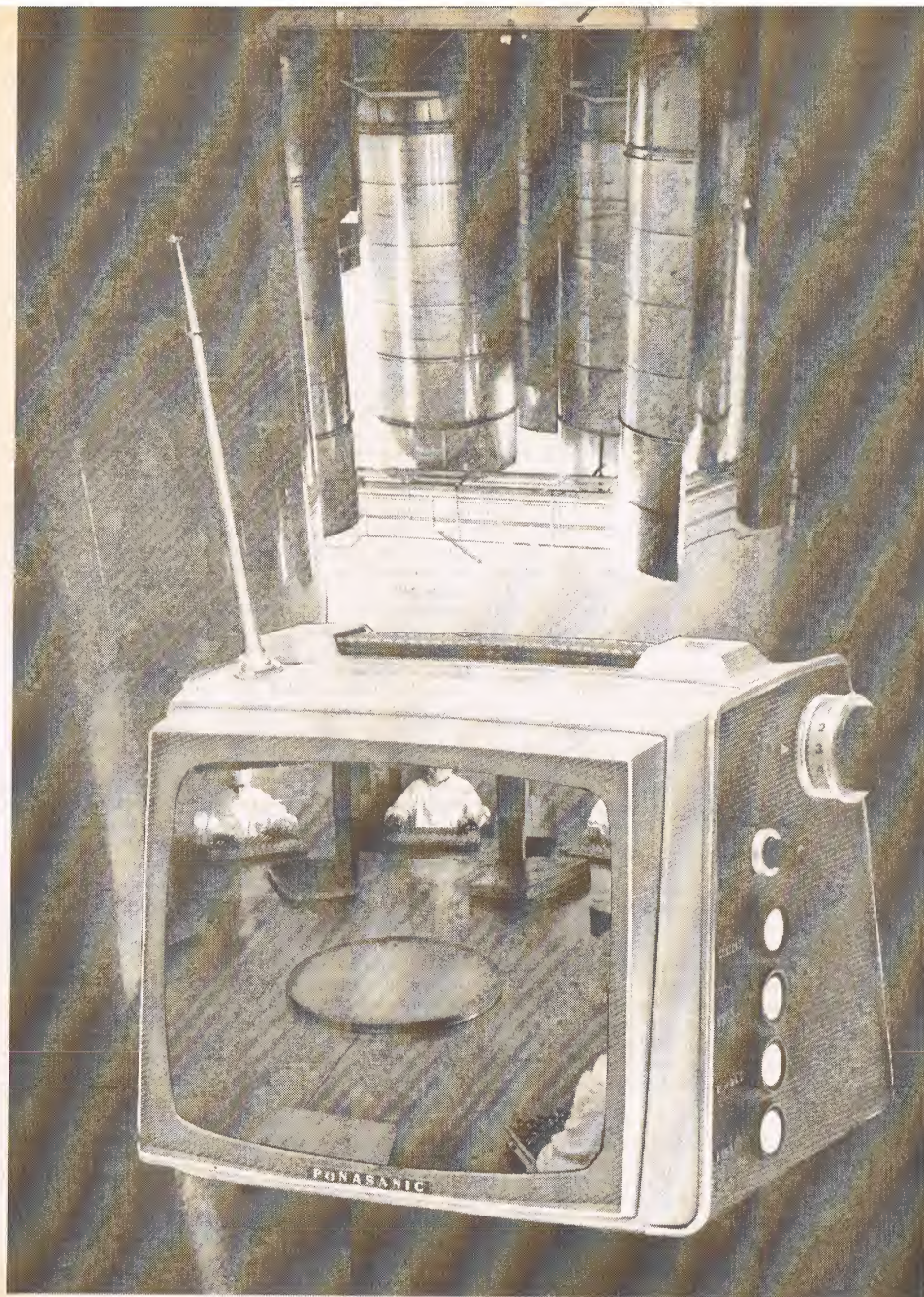
#### Was there much reading and discussion of Buddhism, Hinduism, exotic religions?

Yes, because it was anti-Catholic, anti-Christian. Witchcraft.

#### Was there investigation of the pagan tradition?

Yes, women were interested in the goddess. That was probably the greatest....[end of recording]





Collage by Johann Humayn Beirg

# That Thing We Do

John Zerzan

**F**rom the Latin *re*, or thing, reification is essentially thingification. Theodor Adorno, among others, asserted that society and consciousness have become almost completely reified. Through this process, human practices and relations come to be seen as external objects. What is living ends up treated as a non-living thing or abstraction, and this turn of events is experienced as natural, normal, unchallenged.

In *Tristes Tropiques* Claude Lévi-Strauss provides an image of this reifying process in terms of the atrophy of European civilization: "...like some aging animal whose thickening hide has formed an imperishable crust around its body and, by no longer allowing the skin to breathe, is hastening the aging process."<sup>1</sup> The loss of meaning, immediacy, and spiritual vibrancy in Western civilization is a major theme in the works of Max Weber, and also bears on the reification of modern life. That this failing of life and enchantment seems somehow inevitable and unchangeable, largely just taken for granted, is as important as the reified outcome, and is inseparable from it.

How did human activities and connections become separate from their subjects and take on a thing-like "life" of their own? And given the evident waning of belief in society's institutions and categories, what holds the "things" in thing-ified society together?

Terms like reification and alienation, in a world more and more comprised of the starkest forms of estrangement, are no longer to be found in the literature that supposedly deals with this world. Those who claim to have no ideology are so often the most constrained and

defined by the prevailing ideology they cannot see, and it is possible that the highest degree of alienation is reached where it no longer enters consciousness.

Reification became a widely employed term as defined by the Marxist Georg Lukacs: namely, a form of alienation issuing from the commodity fetishism of modern market relations. Social conditions and the plight of the individual have become mysterious and impenetrable as a function of what we now commonly refer to as consumerist capitalism. We are crushed and blinded by the reifying force of the stage of capital that began in the 20th century.

I think, however, that it may be useful to re-cast reification so as to establish a much deeper meaning and dynamic. The merely and directly human is in fact being drained away as surely as nature itself has been tamed into an object. In the frozen universe of commodities, the reign of things over life is obvious, and that coldness that Adorno saw as the basic principle of bourgeois subjectivity is plumbing new lows.

But if reification is the central mechanism whereby the commodity form permeates the entire culture, it is also much more than that. Kant knew the term, and it was Hegel, soon after, who made major use of it (and objectification, its rough equivalent). He discovered a radical lack of being at the heart of the subject; it is here that we may fruitfully inquire.

The world presents itself to us—and we re-present it. Why the need to do that? Do we know what symbols really symbolize? Is truth that which must be possessed, not re-presented? Signs are basically signals, that is, correlative; but symbols are substitutive. As Husserl put

it, "The symbol exists effectively at the point where it introduced something more than life...."<sup>2</sup> Reification may be an unavoidable corollary or by-product of symbolization itself.

At a minimum, there seem to be reified fundamentals in all networks of domination. Calendars and clocks formalize and further reify time, which was likely the first reification of all. The divided social structure is a reified world largely because it is a symbolic structure of roles and images, not persons. Power crystallizes into networks of domination and hierarchy as reification enters the equation very early on. In the current productionist world, extreme division of labor fulfills its original meaning. Made increasingly passive and meaningless, we endlessly reify ourselves. Our mounting impoverishment approaches the condition in which we are mere things.

Reification permeates postmodern culture, in which only appearances change, and appear alive. The dreadfulness of our postmodernity can be seen as a destination of the history of philosophy, and a destination of a good deal more than just philosophy. History qua history begins as loss of integrity, immersion in an external trajectory that tears the self into parts. The denial of human choice and effective agency is as old as division of labor; only its drastic development or fullness is new.

About 250 years ago the German romantic Novalis complained that "the meaning of life has been lost."<sup>3</sup> Widespread questioning of the meaning of life only began at about this time, just as industrialism made its very first inroads.<sup>4</sup> From this point on, an erosion of meaning has quickly accelerated,



reminding us that the substitutive function of symbolization is also prosthetic. The replacement of the living by the artificial, like technology, involves a thing-ification. Reification is always, at least in part, a techno-imperative.

Technology is "the knack of so arranging the world that we need not experience it."<sup>5</sup> We are expected to deny what is living and natural within us in order to acquiesce in the domination of non-human nature. Technology has unmistakably become the great vehicle of reification. Not forgetting that it is embedded in and embodies an ever-expanding, global field of capital, reification subordinates us to our own objectified creations. ("Things are in the saddle and ride mankind," observed Emerson in the mid-19th century.) Nor is this a recent turn of events; rather, it reflects the master code of culture, *ab origino*. The separation from nature, and its ensuing pacification and manipulation, make one ask, is the individual vanishing? Has culture itself set this in motion? How has it come to pass that a formulation as reified as "children are our most precious resource" does not seem repugnant to everyone?

We are captives of so much that is not only instrumental, fodder for the functioning of other manipulable things, but also ever more simulated. We are exiles from immediacy, in a fading and flattening landscape where thought struggles to unlearn its alienated conditioning. Merleau-Ponty failed in his quest, but at least aimed at finding a primordial ontology of vision prior to the split between subject and object. It is division of labor and the resulting conceptual forms of thought that go unchallenged, delaying discovery of reification and reified thought.

It is, after all, our whole way of knowing that has been so deformed and diminished, and that must be understood as such. "Intelligence" is now an externality to be measured, equated to proficiency in manipulating symbols. Philosophy has become the highly elaborate rationalization of reifications. And even more generally, being itself is constituted as experience and representation, as subject and object. These outcomes must be criticized as fundamentally as possible.

The active, living element in cognition must be uncovered, beneath the reifications that mask it. Cognition,

despite contemporary orthodoxy, is not computation. The philosopher Ryle glimpsed that a form of knowledge that does not rely on symbolic representation might be the basic one.<sup>6</sup> Our notions of reality are the products of an artificially constructed symbol system, whose components have hardened into reifications or objectifications over time, as division of labor coalesced into domination of nature and domestication of the individual.

Thought capable of producing culture and civilization is distancing, non-sensuous. It abstracts from the subject and becomes an independent object. It's telling that sensations are much more resistant to reification than are mental images. Platonic discourse is a prime example of thinking that proceeds at the expense of the senses, in its radical split between perceptions and conceptions. Adorno draws attention to the healthier variant by his observation that in Walter Benjamin's writings "thought presses close to the object, as if through touching, smelling, tasting, it wanted to transform itself."<sup>7</sup> And Le Roy is probably very close to the mark with "we resign ourselves to conception only for want of perception."<sup>8</sup> Historically determined in the deepest sense, the reification aspect of thought is a further cognitive "fall from grace."

Husserl and others figured symbolic representation as originally designed to be only a temporary supplement to authentic expression. Reification enters the picture in a somewhat parallel fashion, as representation passes from the status of a noun used for specific purposes to that of an object. Whether or not these descriptive theses are adequate, it seems at least evident that an ineluctable gap exists between the concept's abstraction and the richness of the web of phenomena. To the point here is Heidegger's conclusion that authentic thinking is "non-conceptual," a kind of "reverential listening."<sup>9</sup>

Always of the utmost relevance is the violence that a steadily encroaching technological ethos perpetrates against lived experience. Gilbert Germain has understood how the ethos forcefully promotes a "forgetfulness of the linkage between reflective thought and the direct perceptual experience of the world from which it arises and to which it ought to return."<sup>10</sup> Engels noted in passing that "human reason has devel-

oped in accordance with man's alteration of nature,"<sup>11</sup> a mild way of referring to the close connection between objectifying, instrumentalizing reason and progressive reification.

In any case, the thought of civilization has worked to reduce the abundance that yet manages to surround us. Culture is a screen through which our perceptions, ideas, and feelings are filtered and domesticated. According to Jean-Luc Nancy, the main thing representational thought represents is its limit.<sup>12</sup> Heidegger and Wittgenstein, possibly the most original of 20th century thinkers, ended up disclaiming philosophy along these lines.

The reified life-world progressively removes what questions it. The literature on society raises ever fewer basic questions about society, and the suffering of the individual is now rarely related to even this unquestioned society. Emotional desolation is seen as almost entirely a matter of freely-occurring "natural" brain or chemical abnormalities, having nothing to do with the destructive context the individual is generally left to blindly endure in a drugged condition.

On a more abstract level, reification can be neutralized by conflating it with objectification, which is defined in a way that places it beyond questioning. Objectification in this sense is taken to mean an awareness of the existence of subjects and objects, and the fact of the self as both subject and object. Hegel, in this vein, referred to it as the very essence of the subject, without which there can be no development. Adorno saw some reification as a necessary element in the necessary process of human objectification. As he became more pessimistic about the realization of a de-reified society, Adorno used reification and objectification as synonyms,<sup>13</sup> completing a demoralized retreat from fully calling either term into question.

I think it may be instructive to accept the two terms as synonymous, not to end up accepting them both but to entertain the notion of exploring basic alienation. All objectification requires an alienation of subject from object, which is fundamental, it would seem, to the goal of reconciling them. How did we get to this horrendous present, definable as a condition in which the reified subject and the reified object

mutually entail one another? How is it that, as William Desmond put it, "the intimacy of being is dissolved in the modern antithesis of subject and object?"<sup>14</sup>

As the world is shaped via objectification, so is the subject: the world as a field of objects open to manipulation. Objectification, as the basis for the domination of nature as external, alien other, presents itself. Clearer still is the use of the term by Marx and Lukacs as the natural means by which humans master the world.

The shift from objects to objectification, from reality to constructions of reality, is also the shift to domination and mystification. Objectification is the take-off point for culture, in that it makes domestication possible. It reaches its full potential with the onset of division of labor, the exchange principle itself moves on the level of objectification. Similarly, none of the institutions of divided society are powerful or determinative without a reified element.

The philosopher Croce considered it sheer rhetoric to speak of a beautiful river or flower; to him, nature was stupid compared to art. This elevation of the cultural is possible only through objectification. The works of Kafka, on the other hand, portray the outcome of objectifying cultural logic, with their striking illustration of a reified landscape that crushes the subject.

Representation and production are the foundations of reification, which cements and extends their empire. Reification's ultimately distancing, domesticating orientation decrees the growing separation between reduced, rigidified subjects and an equally objectified field of experience. As the Situationist line goes, today the eye sees only things and their prices. The genesis of this outlook is vastly older than their formulation denotes; the project of de-objectification can draw strength from the human condition that obtained before reification developed. A "future

primitive" is called for, where a living involvement with the world, and fluid, intimate participation in nature will replace the thingified reign of symbolic civilization.

The very first symptom of alienated life is the very gradual appearance of time. The first reification and increasingly the quintessential one, time is

or to life and incarnated in the first fully mechanized device. In the 15th century Giovanni Tortelli wrote that the clock "seems to be alive, since it moves of its own accord."<sup>15</sup> Time had come to measure its contents, no longer contents measuring time. We so often say we "don't have time," but it is the basic reification, time, that has us.

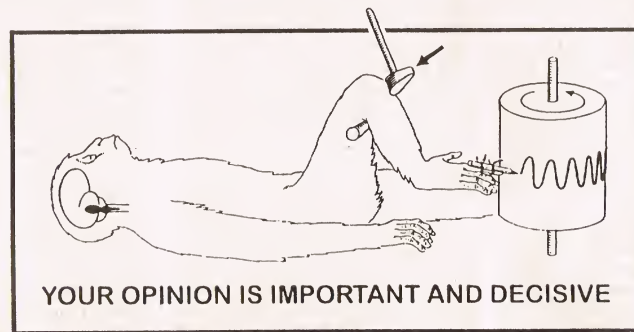
Fragmented life cannot become the norm without the primary victory of time. The complexity, particularity, and diversity of all living creatures cannot be lost to the standardizing realm of the quantitative without this key objectification.

The question of the origin of reification is a compelling one that has rarely been pursued deeply enough. A common error

has been to confuse intelligence with culture; namely, the absence of culture is seen as equivalent to the absence of intelligence. This confusion is further compounded when reification is seen as inherent to the nature of mental functioning. From Thomas Wynn<sup>17</sup> and others we now know that pre-historic humans were our equals in intelligence. If culture is impossible without objectification, it does not follow that either is inevitable, or desirable.

As suspicious as Adorno was of the idea of origins, he conceded that human conduct originally involved no objectification.<sup>18</sup> Husserl was similarly able to refer to the primordial oneness of all consciousness prior to its dissociation.<sup>19</sup>

Bringing this condition of life into focus has proven elusive at best. Lévi-Strauss began his anthropological work with such a quest in mind: "I had been looking for a society reduced to its simplest expression. That of the Nambikwara was so truly simple that all I could find was human beings."<sup>20</sup> In other words, he was really still looking for symbolic culture, and seemed ill-equipped to ponder the meaning of its absence. Herbert Marcuse wanted human history to conform to nature as a subject-object harmony, but he knew



Unapack

virtually synonymous with alienation. We are now so pervasively ruled and regulated by this "it" which of course has no concrete existence that thinking of a pre-civilized, timeless epoch is extremely difficult.

Time is the symptom of symptoms to come. The relationship of subject and object must have been radically different before temporal distance advanced into the psyche. It has come to stand over us as an external thing—predecessor to work and the commodity, separate and dominating as described by Marx. This de-presentizing force implies that de-reification would mean a return to the eternal present wherein we lived before we entered the pull of history.

E.M. Cioran asks, "How can you help resenting the absurdity of time, its march into the future, and all the nonsense about evolution and progress? Why go forward, why live in time?"<sup>21</sup> Walter Benjamin's plea for shattering the reified continuity of history was somewhat similarly based on his yearning for a wholeness or unity of experience. At some point, the moment itself matters and does not rely on other moments "in time."

It was of course the clock that completed the reification, by dissociating time from human events and natural processes. Time by now was fully exteri-



that "history is the negation of nature."<sup>21</sup> The postmodern outlook positively celebrates the reifying presence of history and culture by denying the possibility that a pre-objectification state ever existed. Having surrendered to representation—and every other basic given of past, present, and future barrenness—the postmodernists could scarcely be expected to explore the genesis of reification.

If not the original reification, language is the most consequential, as cornerstone of representational culture. Language is the reification of communication, a paradigmatic move that establishes every other mental separation. The philosopher W.V. Quine's variation on this is that reification arrives with the pronoun.<sup>22</sup>

"In the beginning was the Word...." the beginning of all this, which is killing us by limiting existence to many things. Corollary of symbolization, reification is a sclerosis that chokes off what is living, open, natural. In place of being stands the symbol. If it is impossible for us to coincide with our being, Sartre argues in *Being and Nothingness*, then the symbolic is the measure of that non-coincidence. Reification seals the deal, and language is its universal currency.

An exhausted symbolic mediation with less and less to say prevails in a world where that mediation is now seen as the central, even defining fact of life. In an existence without vibrancy or meaning, nothing is left but language. The relation of language to reality has dominated 20th century philosophy. Wittgenstein, for example, was convinced that the foundation of language and of linguistic meaning is the very basis of philosophy.

This "linguistic turn" appears even more profound if we consider the entire species-sense of language, including its original impact as a radical departure. Language has been fundamental to our obligation to objectify ourselves, in a milieu that is increasingly not our own. Thus it is absurd for Heidegger to say that the truth about language is that it refuses to be objectified. The reification act of language impoverishes existence by creating a universe of meaning sufficient unto itself. The ultimate "sufficient unto itself" is the concept "God," and its ultimate description is, revealingly, "I am Who I am" (*Exodus* 4:14). We have come to

regard the separate, self-enclosed nature of objectification as the highest quality, evidently, rather than as the debasement of the "merely" contingent, relational, connected.

It has been recognized for some time that thought is not language-dependent and that language limits the possibilities of thought.<sup>23</sup> Gottlob Frege wondered if to think in a non-reified way is possible, how it could be possible to explain how thinking can ever be reified. The answer was not to be found in his chosen field of formal logic.

In fact, language does proceed as a thing external to the subject, and molds our cognitive processes. Classic psychoanalytic theory ignored language, but Melanie Klein discussed symbolization as a precipitant of anxiety. To translate Klein's insight into cultural terms, anxiety about erosion of a non-objectified life-world provokes language. We experience "the urge to thrust against language,"<sup>24</sup> when we feel that we have given up our voices, and are left only with language. The enormity of this loss is suggested in C.S. Peirce's definition of the self as mainly a consistency of symbolization; "my language," conversely, "is the sum total of my self," he concluded.<sup>25</sup> Given this kind of reduction, it is not difficult to agree with Lacan that induction into the symbolic world generates a persistent yearning that arises from one's absence from the real world. "The speechform is a mere surrogate," wrote Joyce in *Finnegans Wake*.

Language refutes every appeal to immediacy by dishonoring the unique and immobilizing the mobile. Its elements are independent entities from the consciousness that utters them, which in turn weigh down that consciousness. According to Quine, this reification plays a part in creating a "structured system of the world," by closing up the "loose ends of raw experience."<sup>26</sup> Quine does not recognize the limiting aspects of this project. In his incomplete final work, the phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty began to explore how language diminishes an original richness, how it actually works against perception.

Language, as a separate medium, does indeed facilitate a structured system, based on itself, that deals with anarchic "loose ends" of experience. It accomplishes this, basically in the ser-

vice of division of labor, by avoiding the here and now of experience. "Seeing is forgetting the name of the thing one sees," an anti-reification statement by Paul Valéry,<sup>27</sup> suggests how words get in the way of direct apprehension. The Murngin of northern Australia saw name-giving as a kind of death, the loss of an original wholeness.<sup>28</sup> A pivotal moment of reification occurred when we succumbed to names and became inscribed in letters. It is perhaps when we most need to express ourselves, fully and completely, that language most clearly reveals its reductive and inarticulate nature.

Language itself corrupts, as Rousseau claimed in his famous dream of a community stripped of it. The path beyond the claims of reification involves breaking representation's age-old spell.

Another basic avenue of reification is ritual, which originated as a means to instill conceptual and social order. Ritual is an objectified schema of action, involving symbolic behavior that is standardized and repetitive. It is the first fetishizing of culture, and points decisively toward domestication. Concerning the latter, ritual can be seen as the original model of calculability of production. Along these lines, Georges Condominas challenged the distinction that is ordinarily made between ritual and agriculture. His fieldwork in Southeast Asia led him to see ritual as an integral component of the technology of traditional farming.<sup>29</sup>

Mircea Eliade has described religious rites as real only to the extent that they imitate or symbolically repeat some kind of archetypal event, adding that participation is felt to be genuine only to the extent of this identification; that is, only to the extent that the participant ceases to be himself or herself.<sup>30</sup> Thus the repetitive ritual act is very closely related to the depersonalizing, devaluing essence of division of labor, and at the same time approaches a virtual definition of the reifying process itself. To lose oneself in fealty to an earlier, frozen event or moment: to become reified, a thing that owes its supposed authenticity to some prior reification.

Religion, like the rest of culture, springs from the false notion of the necessity for combat against the forces of nature. The powers of nature are reified, along with those of their reli-

gious or mythological counterparts. From animism to deism, the divine develops against a natural world depicted as increasingly threatening and chaotic. J.G. Frazer saw religious and magical phenomena as "the conscious conversion of what had hitherto been regarded as living beings into impersonal substances."<sup>31</sup> To deify is to reify, and a November 1997 discovery by archaeologist Juan Vadeum helps us situate the domesticating context of this movement. In Chiapas, Mexico, Vadeum found four Mayan stone carvings that represent original "grandfathers" of wisdom and power. Significantly, these figures of seminal importance to Mayan religion and cosmology symbolize War, Agriculture, Trade, and Tribute.<sup>32</sup> As Feuerbach noted, every important stage in the history of human civilization begins with religion,<sup>33</sup> and religion serves civilization both substantively and formally. In its formal aspect, the reifying nature of religion is the most potent contribution of all.

Art is the other early objectification of culture, which is what makes it into a separate activity and gives it reality. Art is also a quasi-utopian promise of happiness, always broken. The betrayal resides largely in the reification. "To be a work of art means to set up a world," according to Heidegger,<sup>34</sup> but this counter-world is powerless against the rest of the objectified world of which it remains a part.

Georg Simmel described the triumph of form over life, the danger posed to individuality by the surrender to form. The dualism of form and content is the blueprint for reification itself, and partakes in the basic divisions of class society.

At base there is an abstract and somewhat narrow similarity to all aesthetic appearance. This is due to a severe restriction of the sensual, enemy number one of reification. And remembering our Freud, it is the curbing of Eros that makes culture possible. Can it be an accident that the three senses that are excluded from art—touch, smell, and taste—are the senses of sensual love?

Max Weber recognized that culture "appears as man's emancipation from the organically prescribed cycle of natural life. For this very reason," he continued, "culture's every step forward seems condemned to lead to an ever

more devastating senselessness."<sup>35</sup> The representation of culture is followed by pleasure in representation that replaces pleasure per se. The will to create culture overlooks the violence in and of culture, a violence that is inescapable given culture's basis in fragmentation and separation. Every reification forgets this.

For Homer, the idea of barbarism was of a piece with the absence of agriculture. Culture and agriculture have always been linked by their common basis of domestication; to lose the natural within us is to lose nature without. One becomes a thing in order to master things.

Today the culture of global capitalism abandons its claim to be culture, even as the production of culture exceeds the production of goods. Reification, the process of culture, dominates when all awaits naturalization, in a constantly transformed environment that is "natural" in name only. Objects themselves—and even the "social" relationships among them—are seen as real only insofar as they are recognized as existing in mediaspace or cyberspace.

A domesticating reification renders everything, including us, its objects. And these objects possess less and less originality or aura, as discussed by commentators from Baudelaire and Morris to Benjamin and Baudrillard. "Now from America empty indifferent things are pouring across, sham things, dummy life," wrote Rilke.<sup>36</sup> Meanwhile the whole natural world has become a mere object.

Postmodern practice severs things from their history and context, as in the device of inserting "quotations" or arbitrarily juxtaposed elements from other periods into music, painting, novels. This gives the objects a rootless autonomy of sorts, while subjects have little or none.

We seem to be objects destroyed by objectification, our grounding and authenticity leached away. We are like the schizophrenic who actively experiences himself as a thing.

There is a coldness, even a deadness, that is becoming impossible to deny. A palpable sense of "something missing" inheres in the unmistakable impoverishment of a world objectifying itself. Our only hope may lie precisely in the fact that the madness of the whole is so apparent.

It is still maintained that reification is an ontological necessity in a complex world, which is exactly the point. The de-reifying act must be the return to simple, non-divided life. The life congealed and concealed in petrified thingness cannot reawaken without a vast undoing of this ever-more standardized, massified lost world.

Until fairly recently—until civilization—nature was a subject, not an object. In hunter-gatherer societies no strict division or hierarchy existed between the human and the non-human. The participatory nature of vanished connectedness has to be restored, that condition in which meaning was lived, not objectified into a grid of symbolic culture. The very positive picture we now have of pre-history establishes a perspective of anticipatory remembrance: there is the horizon of subject-object reconciliation.

This prior participation with nature is the reverse of the domination and distancing at the heart of reification. It reminds us that all desire is a desire for relationship, at its best reciprocal and animate. To enable this nearness or presence is a gigantic practical project, that will make an end to these dark days.

## Notes:

1. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques* (New York, 1972), p.382.
2. Edmund Husserl, *Le Discours et le Symbole* (Paris, 1962), p.66.
3. Novalis, *Schriften*, vol.II (Stuttgart, 1965–1977), p.594.
4. Iddo Landau, "Why Has the Question of the Meaning of Life Arisen in the Last Two and a Half Centuries?" *Philosophy Today*, Summer 1967.
5. Quote attributed to the playwright Max Frisch. Source unknown.
6. Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (London, 1949).
7. Theodor Adorno, *Prisms* (Cambridge, 1981), p.240.
8. Edouard Le Roy, *The New Philosophy of Henri Bergson* (New York, 1913), p.156.
9. Martin Heidegger, "What is Thinking?" in *Basic Writings* (New York, 1969).
10. Gilbert B. Germain, *A Discourse on Disenchantment* (Albany, 1992), p.126.
11. Friedrich Engels, *Dialectic of Nature* (Moscow, 1934), p.231.
12. Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Birth to Presence* (Stanford, 1993), p.2.

Continued on page 62



# Description of A Struggle

by Max Cafard

## The Castle

They came to the Castle for many reasons. Some sought the Truth, others yearned for Community, and still others dreamt of Power.

In August of 1995 a small band of anarchists and ecologists gathered at Castle Toward near Dunoon, Scotland for an "International Social Ecology Gathering." The Castle's cryptic name is quite appropriate. Its dark stone walls seemed to cry out: "Toward What?" A good question, for few of those who gathered realized the true historic meaning of the events in which they had participated. And few were aware of the storm that had gathered and then raged above the turrets of Castle Toward.

Those who gathered were told that the Gathering's theme was "democracy and ecology" and its purpose "to strengthen the ties between political activists and thinkers interested in radical ecological politics, anarchism, socialism, and politics." It is likely that most who were there saw the Gathering, and still look back at it, as no more than a pleasant Anarchist's Holiday where they met like-minded people, socialized and exchanged ideas and addresses.

What they did not know was that the fate of the Gathering was being guided by an Invisible Hand. The Hand of Murray Bookchin, Patriarch of Social Ecology, prophet of "hidden tendencies" and "educer" of the "directionality" of all things. They did not know that the true purpose of the Gathering at Castle Toward was to defend Bookchin's theoretical fortress, the "Castle of Social Ecology," and to serve the true "Movement Toward" of History, its authentic meaning and "directionality."

When the official version of the Gathering was recounted in the



Bookchinite Social Ecology Network International, the hidden significance of the event was finally revealed. It was disclosed that the Castle had been the scene of a devious attempt to destroy Social Ecology itself, and that the true Champions of Social Ecology had rallied to its defense.

## The Metamorphosis

The cause of the uproar among the devout was the fact that a certain "C," who has been for over twenty years one of the most energetic Defenders of the Social Ecological Faith, had the unmitigated gall to raise questions about some of the Patriarch's ideas.

One is tempted to feel some sympathy for "C," in view of the deplorable treatment he subsequently received from Bookchin and his allies for the unspeakable crime of critical thought. But to be honest, "C" fully deserves his fate. He is only paying the price for his long-term indulgence in the vice of sectarianism, a moral failing long en-

demic to the anarchist movement. For years, our poor tragicomic hero was fully aware of the fact that the Patriarch was far from an ideal Philosopher King and the walls of the Castle of Social Ecology were in serious disrepair. Indeed the King often carried on scandalously, more in the style of a theoretical Court Jester. Yet the wretched "C" continued to patch together new theoretical garb for our often unclothed Philosophical Emperor, all in defense of his crumbling Fortress of Ideas.

The hapless "C" finally discovered to his dismay that such wishful thinking must founder on the shoals of sectarian reality. In a political cult like that of the Patriarch, there comes a time when one must either suppress one's critical faculties in an act of wormlike submission or face expulsion. "C" had for some time been engaging in discrete questioning of certain Bookchinite dogmas, and the future of his social ecological wormhood already appeared in doubt. He now took on a task that

sealed his fate: a detailed critique of some of the Patriarch's most fundamental ideas. What is more, he brought along a draft of his critique to the Castle of Social Ecology itself and read and discussed some excerpts.

## Before the Law

The Patriarch was enraged that such a challenge to his authority would in-

ing devoted by far the greatest amount of its time, and the only decision that was made by majority vote were consigned to the social ecological memory hole by the trusty editors of the International. Two days had been spent in the drafting of a document entitled "Principles Of The International Social Ecology Network," which was then adopted by majority vote. However, the Bookchinite vanguard, exercising the



trude to within the very Castle walls. While Bookchin faxed an urgent plea to the Castle, warning of dire consequences if his principles were not staunchly defended, his call to arms was not heeded. The participants listened politely and rather impassively to criticisms of Bookchin, his partisans failed to dominate the proceedings and impose his orthodoxy, and the group adopted a statement of principles that spurned Bookchinist sectarianism for the sake of a broader, non-dogmatic social ecology.

The pages of the Bookchinite International, however, told a different story. It published a long report on the Gathering in which all the presentations were summarized. All that is, except for "C"'s illicit critique. In this case, not a single point from the presentation was mentioned. Instead, the editors reported faithfully that "[C]"'s very presence created some considerable debate," though there had actually been not a word of debate on this topic. Furthermore, the activity to which the Gather-

famous Bakuninist principle of "Invisible Dictatorship," decided to rewrite this particular bit of history according to its true Bookchinite "latent directionality," ignoring such counter-revolutionary irrelevancies as the facts, and such trivialities as the actual decisions of the people who were there.

## The Trial

History having been corrected, it was not long before the forces of anarchist orthodoxy came down on "C." The Patriarch deigned to reply to "C"'s relatively brief presentation at the Gathering with a lengthy diatribe, "Comments on the International Social Ecology Gathering and the 'Deep Social Ecology' of [C]," excommunicating "C" from the fold of Social Ecology. The contents of this document, unprecedented in the history of inadvertent political humor, are the basis for "C"'s "Confession," which is reprinted here. While one might suspect that some of the ludicrous accusations have been

made up to make the Patriarch look ridiculous, this is not the case. All the indictments to which "C" pleads guilty actually emanated from the fevered imagination of Bookchin himself.

Next, "C" was purged from the International Advisory Board of the journal *Democracy and Nature*. "C," a Board member and contributor since the inception of the journal, was dropped without discussion or even notification, and his subscription to the journal was immediately terminated. In addition, the editor, Takis Fotopoulos not only reprinted Bookchin's diatribe, but also began a series of attacks on "C"'s critique of Bookchin, while continually refusing to publish the critique itself.

All Seekers of Truth are encouraged to procure a copy of Bookchin's "Comments" and read this treatise carefully at their earliest possible convenience. If any work illustrates the "tendency" and "directionality" of Bookchinism, this is it. Indeed, it creates a new philosophical category for which Bookchin will long be remembered: Eduction to the Absurd.

Meanwhile, we offer you "C"'s "Confession," which we take the liberty of retitling "Memoirs of an Ex-Worm." Furthermore, we compliment "C" on finally realizing his evolutionary potential and present him with the 1998 "Max Cafard Slow Learner's Award."

## A Postscript on the Castle

After several days at the Castle, the word began to spread among those who had gathered. Castle Toward was not in fact an authentic Castle but rather a latter-day imitation of one. It was a false Castle, and indeed a bit of a travesty of one. The Chateau Fort was in reality a Chateau Faux.

However, it was also discovered that a true Castle existed—out of sight from the false one, but only a short distance away. Those who made the "steep and rugged ascent" to that Castle found, however, that it lay in ruins. The true Castle had been destroyed centuries ago in one of those perennial internecine slaughters in which certain latent tendencies of History are rendered so appallingly real.



# Confession

## to Comrade Murray Bookchin, Chairman and General Secretary of the Social Ecologist Party and Founder of Dialectical Naturalism (DIANAT)

by C.

I have reviewed the charges leveled against me by Comrade Bookchin in his lengthy account of my heinous crimes, treasonous activities, and egregious errors in thought and action. I recognize the overwhelming weight of evidence he presents of my guilt. Consequently, I have no alternative but to make a full confession of all my crimes against Comrade Bookchin, the Social Ecologist Party, and the Principles of Dialectical Naturalism (DIANAT).

I confess that I have consorted with a counter-revolutionary conspiracy of (as Comrade Bookchin so clearly identifies them) "Bioregionalists, Lifestyle Anarchists, and Deep Ecologists" (BLADE) to undermine and discredit Comrade Murray Bookchin himself, to destroy the Social Ecologist Party, and to render incoherent the Principles of Dialectical Naturalism (DIANAT). I have been under the complete control of and in the pay of agents of BLADE for the past eight years.

I confess that I am guilty, as Comrade Bookchin points out with admirable specificity, of advocating not only such pernicious and counter-revolutionary doctrines as bioregionalism, lifestyle anarchism, and deep ecology, but also liberalism, social democratism, right-wing libertarianism, irrationalism, Heideggerianism, Castoriadianism, elitism, personalism, nihilism, anti-rationalism, post-modernism, Derridianism and eclecticism.

I confess that I have, as Comrade Bookchin so poetically puts it, "been in the process of shedding" Social Ecology for

years. Indeed, I have shamefully treated Comrade Bookchin's profound and exalted doctrine as if it were some sort of contemptible reptilian skin. I have also, in the apt phrasing of Comrade Bookchin "assiduously flogged libertarian municipalism," shamelessly treating it as if it were some kind of dead horse, instead of objective scientific truth, as the Principles of Dialectical Naturalism (DIANAT) have shown it to be. For all these eight years I have secretly been a Deep Social Ecologist, a monstrous hybrid between a clear-thinking, humanistic social ecologist and a mystical, misanthropic eco-brutalist. I have gone to great lengths to hide this disgraceful political miscegenation against which Comrade Bookchin has so vigilantly warned us in his attempts to save us from ideological impurity. Moreover, I have attempted to deceive the gullible by never in a single instance calling myself a "Deep Social Ecologist," which, as only experts such as Comrade Bookchin and his worthy predecessors in the noble art of high-minded inquisition could divine, proves that I am precisely that kind of miscreant.

I confess that I distributed a malicious tract called "the Politics of Social Ecology" which included, as Comrade Bookchin pointedly typifies it, the "scandalous caveat": "Note: This is a draft. Please do not copy or quote it. Comments are welcome." I employed this ruse precisely as Comrade Bookchin so shrewdly grasps, "to immunize myself from criticism by abjuring people from explicitly quoting from [my] essay." I confess that this tactic was "grossly dishonorable," and that it, as Comrade Bookchin so lucidly phrases it, "exhibits an immorality that beggars some of the worst hypocrisies [Comrade Bookchin] has encountered in decades of political life." As Comrade Bookchin instantaneously grasped, I did not in fact want any comments on my so-called "rough draft." Actually it was not a draft at all, but rather the sole version I ever planned to produce. In reality, I

hoped to distribute hundreds of thousands of what Comrade Bookchin has aptly called this "single-spaced propaganda tract," thereby slandering Comrade Bookchin while preventing his legitimate response to my calumnies. The costs of this underhanded plot were to be underwritten by a consortium of Deep Ecologists, lifestyle anarchists, and the Prince of Wales (figures whose interconnection few other than the astute Comrade Bookchin have been able to fathom—for this, see his brilliant disquisition entitled "Theses on Social Ecology in a Period of Reaction"). I intended to continue to distribute this pernicious document as widely as possible in order to discredit Comrade Bookchin and the Principles of Dialectical Naturalism (DIANAT) and thereby to retard the march of revolution and save capitalism from destruction. My ridiculous claim that "comments" were to be used to "revise" my slanderous pamphlet for inclusion in a book called *Social Ecology After Bookchin*, edited by a Prof. "Andrew Light," is a complete lie. No such book is planned. "Andrew Light" does not exist. I made up the name in a beer-induced stupor.

I confess that I deviously distributed four copies of my libelous document at the International Social Ecology Gathering, with the express intention of assuring that copies would eventually appear everywhere in the world. I cunningly contrived to distribute these copies only to carefully chosen pawns who would accept every criticism I made of Comrade Bookchin and the Principles of Dialectical Naturalism (DIANAT) and who spend inordinate amounts of time at Kinko's. Happily for the future course of world history, my insidious plot was foiled when a copy fortuitously (and entirely against my will) fell into the hands of a comrade loyal to Comrade Bookchin and the true Principles of Dialectical Naturalism (DIANAT).

I confess to making "pedestrian criticisms" of Comrade Bookchin and with being "a middle-class philistine," despite my many trips to Comrade Bookchin's Institute for Social Ecology in idyllic, rural Vermont, where he so patiently but futilely instructed me in the fine art of class consciousness. I wholeheartedly endorse his wise failure to reply directly to my feeble criticisms, which are so idiotically "pedestrian" that it would be demeaning to a true philosopher like Comrade Bookchin to lower himself to the point of an actual response.

I confess that my views are, as Comrade Bookchin so penetratingly reveals, "essentially mystical," a fact that I craftily attempt to disguise by creating the illusion of using careful philosophical analysis and precise logical reasoning, processes in which I actually have no faith at all and see only as tools of mysticism and irrationality. My true goal has always been to merge "second nature" into "first nature," and to reduce humanity to a vegetative state, thereby rendering it a literal "slime of history." Furthermore, as Comrade Bookchin has charged, I often expressed my ideas with qualifiers "such as 'if,' 'maybe,' 'possibly,' and 'probably,'" and it is clear that I do not have "any concrete views of my own." (Or at least I think that maybe I don't.)

I confess that I tried to portray Comrade Bookchin as "a fickle thinker," implying that he held ideas at one time that are in actual conflict with his present ideas. In fact, I have always known that he has never changed his views on any topic, and that the truths so brilliantly expressed in his earlier works have had a latent potentiality, a directionality and a nism that leads precisely to the more developed verities of

his more mature writings.

I confess that I have conspired with liberals "to demand of all of us a demeanor that is passive-receptive, quietistic, and ultimately submissive." In pursuit of this end I have become entirely, as Comrade Bookchin puts it with such precision, "campus-bound." I have chosen to restrict all my activities to campuses because they have been bastions of absolute quietism ever since Comrade Bookchin retired from his two Professorships and finished lecturing (as he has so often pointed out with justifiable pride) "at every major university in the United States." While I have thus cloistered myself within campus walls, agents of BLADE and other counter-revolutionary elements have been authorized to spread false rumors of my participation in political demonstrations, movements and meetings in order to mislead the public.

I confess that even as I worked secretly for quietism, I publicly and ostentatiously participated in movements for local control and municipalization of utilities, and duplicitously propagandized for democratization of local government. I also instructed agents of BLADE to spread false stories that I have for years been heavily involved in a fight against one of the world's largest and most exploitative mining companies, while in reality I continued to help prop up capitalism against the ferocious onslaughts of Comrade Bookchin. At the same time, I made false and malicious statements about Comrade Bookchin himself, such as that the most concrete action he ever took against corporate capitalism was to complain about Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream.

I confess that as part of my quietistic campaign I have secretly initiated a movement to—as Comrade Bookchin has brilliantly described my crime—"displace with great, fervent revolutionary hymns like 'The Marseillaise,' 'The Internationale,' and 'A Las Barricadas' and replace them with the insipid saccharine fare of Mary Poppins." Indeed, I have pressured my own organization, the Delta Greens, to begin and end every meeting by singing tunes from that pernicious musical, in order to undermine whatever truly revolutionary impulses may still have survived, despite my quietistic influence. Furthermore, I have viciously spread the disinformation that "The Marseillaise," "The Internationale," and "A Las Barricadas" are respectively, a French sauce, a night club, and a school of ravenous fish.

I confess that I have defended attempts by the renegade Howard Hawkins to "warp" the Left Green program, make "nonsense demands," and "denature" the pathetically little that remains of the American Left as a result of not following Comrade Bookchin's wise leadership. Furthermore, I have also remained a member of the miserable little counter-revolutionary sect called the "Left Green Network," in order to promote liberal reformism and thereby aid the renegade Hawkins in his efforts to "legitimate capitalism," as Comrade Bookchin so accurately labels the crime of that wretched tract to the cause of Social Ecology.

I confess that in the world-historical battle (la lutte finale) between Social Ecology and Deep Ecology, the most important political and intellectual event of modern times, I "stood 'above' the fray" as Comrade Bookchin has so aptly put it. Not only did I exhibit complete "intellectual servility" in not justly condemning the enemies of the Revolution and indeed, of the entire human race, but I also lied to certain close co-conspirators, claiming that my true motive was to avoid



joining Comrade Bookchin "at the intellectual gutter level," and even slanderously questioning whether this scholar of Hellenic civilization had, much like his beloved Parthenon, lost some of his Marbles.

I confess that as Comrade Bookchin, showing his acute memory for details, reminds me, I "perennially complained to [him] in the past of how poorly [my] own 'affinity group' meetings in New Orleans were attended." This complaining, with which I burdened Comrade Bookchin unfairly, was especially malicious and deceptive, since I was never a member of any affinity group for all the time that I was annoyingly bitching about it to the long-suffering Comrade Bookchin.

I confess that I have supported the institution of "programs directed at navel-gazing, psychotherapy and 'surrealist manifestos'" that were to be located in "a vast network of ashrams." I made efforts to procure land (with promises of heavy subsidies from Deep Ecologists) on which such ashrams were to be built, and in which all these unsavory activities were simultaneously to take place.

I confess that I have invoked the great dialectician Hegel himself to viciously cast aspersions on Comrade Bookchin's correct interpretation of Social Ecology and the Principles of Dialectical Naturalism (DIANAT), and that I have spread such lies as the "passive-receptive" idea that a dialectical thinker should look for the truth in various contending viewpoints, instead of taking that properly "robust" and "combative" approach for which Comrade Bookchin is so perfect a model.

I confess that the enormity of my crimes is immeasurable, especially at this crucial turning point in History as Social Ecology moves into a new period of revolutionary struggle and the appeal of Comrade Bookchin's Dialectical Naturalism (DIANAT) spreads among the masses like some previously unknown strain of influenza.

No! I will not at this decisive historical moment leave our revered leader Comrade Bookchin and the faithful Explicator of his ideas Comrade Biehl without any remaining disciples among the intellectual workers!

I denounce bioregionalism! I admit that there are no bioregions, only municipalities and the stuff in between! I denounce Deep Ecology as a misanthropic, cryptofascist, mystical form of eco-brutalism! I promise never to meditate, and to stay away from California and any places with large trees! I denounce lifestyle anarchism as a petty-bourgeois deviation! I promise to always eat meat, carry a gun and remain in air-conditioned places like Comrade Bookchin himself! Finally, I denounce Surre(gion)alism, that insidious form of nihilistic "wordplay" with absolutely no meaning that I myself criminally invented to sap the revolutionary energies of the youth of this country! I renounce all metaphors, strange and bizarre images, impertinent witticisms, words with parentheses inside them, and, especially, unsavory attempts at "satire" (which is no more than a degraded form of Comrade Bookchin's own noble art of sarcasm), and I swear that I will remain on that sound and sober literal plane of meaning on which the final revolutionary struggle will ultimately be fought and won!

In sum, I confess all the crimes, conscious or unconscious, real or imaginary, that I have ever committed against Comrade Bookchin, the Social Ecologist Party, and the

Principles of Dialectical Naturalism (DIANAT). I denounce every counterrevolutionary deviation into which I have strayed and every deformation of Comrade Bookchin's vision that I have perpetrated. I denounce all the agents of BLADE, in whose employ I have despicably served for eight years.

I know that I deserve to spend the rest of my life hauling maple syrup in some social ecological re-education camp in the desolate Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. But I humbly beg Comrade Bookchin to pardon my misdeeds and to accept me back into the ranks of the Radical Intelligentsia, the ranks of those who are truly "rounded" and "robust."

I swear that I will in the future be "ultimately submissive" to no one and nothing other than Comrade Bookchin and his immortal and immutable Principles of Dialectical Naturalism (DIANAT), which will henceforth be the "objective basis" for my life!

I have learned my lesson:

**I LOVE BIG MURRAY!**

## Notes from That Thing We Do

Continued from page 57

13. Theodor Adorno, *Prisms* (Cambridge, 1983) p.262, for example.
14. William Desmond, *Perplexity and Ultimacy* (Albany, 1995), p.64.
15. E.M. Cioran, *On the Heights of Despair* (Chicago, 1990), p.126.
16. Giovanni Tortelli, *De Orthographia*, 1471.
17. Thomas Wynn, *The Evolution of Spatial Competence* (Urbana, 1989).
18. Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory* (Minneapolis, 1997), pp.118,184.
19. Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (Evanston, 1970)
20. Lévi-Strauss, *op.cit.*, p.358.
21. Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man* (Boston, 1964), p.236.
22. W.V. Quine, *From Stimulus to Science* (Cambridge, 1995), p.27.
23. Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, *The Roots of Thinking* (Philadelphia, 1990)
24. Ludwig Wittgenstein, "Wittgenstein's Lecture on Ethics," *Philosophical Review* 74 (1965), p.12.
25. C.S. Peirce, *Collected Papers* (Cambridge, 1931-1958), vol.5, pp.28,29.
26. Quine, *op.cit.*, p.29.
27. Quotation is title of Robert Irwin's autobiographical work (Berkeley, 1982).
28. Bradd B. Shore, *Culture in Mind* (New York, 1996), p.222.
29. Georges Condominas, *We Have Eaten the Forest* (New York, 1977).
30. Mircea Eliade, quoted in *False Consciousness*, by Joseph Gabel (Oxford, 1975), p.39.
31. J.G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (New York, 1932-36), XLIX, p.74.
32. Mark Stevenson, "Mayan Stone's Discovery May Confirm Ancient Text" (Associated Press, November 17, 1997).
33. Ludwig Feuerbach, *Lectures on the Essence of Religion* (New York, 1967), p.209.
34. Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in *Basic Writings* (New York, 1969), p.170.
35. Max Weber, "Religious Rejections of the World and their Directions," in *Essays on Sociology*, Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds. (New York, 1958), pp.356-357.
36. Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters of Rilke*, vol.2 (New York, 1969), p.374.



**We Love Big Murray!**



## Loose Cannons

By VanZanten

### THE ELECTRONIC DRUGGING OF YOUTH: Hip Hop as Opium

*The Rhetoric of the real already meant that the status of the latter had been gravely menaced. The golden age is that of language's innocence where it doesn't have to add an "effect of reality" to what is said.*

Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations* (New York: Semiotext[e], 1983).

Perhaps no other genre of popular culture has seen an explosion in popularity as complete and totalizing as rap music and its accompanying trappings have over the past decade. In the mid-eighties only a few radio stations in selective urban areas would broadcast rap music at all. Today, nearly every major market area has one or more stations devoted solely to rap. Similarly, struggling to survive in a contracting and saturated market space, many so-called "modern rock" stations have crossed over and are now playing certain rap selections, in addition to rap's "urban cousin" R&B. The corporate world has jumped on the bandwagon as well. Once banned to a seemingly "underground existence," rap has become a major marketing tool for everything from designer clothing lines to soft drinks. Television as well has become saturated with rap videos. Once confined to a half-hour spot on both MTV and BET, both stations play rap videos regularly, mixing them in with their "regular programming." It takes only half a brain to conclude that rap and the "culture" that comes with it have definitely gone mainstream.

Certainly, we are all aware of the political and aesthetic battles that have accompanied rap in its decade long rise to the top. From angry inner city ministers and FBI agents railing over gangsta rap's violent lyrics to other entertainers' frequent copyright suits, rap has been embroiled in political and aesthetic controversy since day one.

Most rappers and their intellectual hangers on attempt to defend rap as a form of urban creativity and self-expression, as an

aesthetic rebellion against inner-city poverty and nihilism. They tend to view themselves as "rebels," mocking the white suburban status quo with their strategic reversal of standard morality, all the while selling their angst filled "poetry" to the affluent youth of suburbia; thus, scoring an irony filled double victory. Not only have they escaped the material depravity of a lumpenproletarian existence but they've gotten the establishment's youth to subsidize it!

However, far from representing any form of effective rebellion or refusal of the capitalist status quo, rap music and Hip-Hop culture fortify, strengthen and in many cases celebrate it. Nevertheless, rap's collusion with capital goes well beyond a mere ideological advocacy of capitalist mores. It is embedded in the very essence of rap as a form of popular culture, in its inescapable corruption by the culture industry and the semiotic codes that structure, determine and neutralize any attempt at cultural resistance. To renounce capital, it is necessary to renounce rap and all its associated phenomenon. It is impossible to struggle against capital while accepting the roles it defines within the institutions it controls that are an integral part of its repressive apparatus.

One of rap music's essential tasks is that of religious stupefaction. This is not so much in the vast numbers of rappers that are avowed Muslims or Christians, but in the very tendency for rap music to become a religious exercise for those that come under its sway. On the level of political sophistication, rap is rather juvenile. The most serious about their political or spiritual allegiances are followers of either Louis Farrakhan or Black Nationalism. Perhaps the only group to advance beyond this level is the Oakland, Ca. based "Coup," but even it didn't get very far—naïve Third Worldism of the Maoist variety was about the extent of it. One of the essential features of popular culture is its ability to neutralize whatever message it expresses. Even the most revolutionary-sounding rhetoric gets commodified, turned into a stale cliché, and used to push the products of the "Hip-Hop" culture.

Rap's religious nature lies in its tendency to consume the lives of a whole layer of both urban and suburban youth who see in it a way out of the nihilism of their daily lives. Music, since the days of early rock and roll, has always tended to do this, but with rap, the situation has qualitatively escalated. Everyone wants to be either an MC or a DJ, resigning themselves to a life that is produced and offered up to them by capitalism as "rebellious." A countless amount of exchange value is poured into CDs, 12 inches, and DJ equipment, not to mention

the expensive clothes and other identifying signs that any serious member of the "Hip-Hop community" must display. Designer labels like POLO, Nautica, Tommy Hilfiger, DKNY and Timberland could run their entire business off of the "Hip-Hop community." A quick glance at any of the "Hip-Hop" magazines like *The Source* reveals countless spectacular images of these commodities, either from advertisements, product reviews or on the person of the rappers themselves. Those most seriously involved in rap, reproduce the code, from clothes to discourse and beyond. Entire personal relationships become mediated through the idiom of rap, as people find they have nothing else to discuss.

Like any church, rap music offers a diversion from the meaningless existence of everyday life. As such, it helps disaffected youth avoid focussing their anger and energy against the alienation which plagues their lives. In the end it only reinforces that alienation.

Several years ago there existed what one may have called a schism in the "Hip-Hop Community." This was between the "hard-core" and gangsta rappers who received virtually no radio play on the one side and the pop or "soft" rappers on the other, who adorned the airwaves with their trite and unsophisticated jingles. However, today that distinction has been obliterated, as previously "hard-core" acts have become accepted into the mainstream media and have taken their place beside their pop comrades.

An essential feature of almost all rap acts is their incessant reference to "reality," "realness," "true rap," etc. Rappers always claim that they "represent," apparently referring to their connections with the reality of the inner-city experience. Nevertheless, it has become increasingly apparent that the rappers "represent" absolutely nothing but themselves. "Hip-Hop" culture has been integrated into capitalist society. However rap started out, whether or not it was an authentic cultural reaction to the American ghetto experience or not, it has now become its own entity referring only unto itself.

This is not to say that real oppression doesn't exist in the ghetto any longer, for certainly it does; only that rap music has stopped referring to it, stopped "representing" it—that is, if it ever did in the first place. This is a familiar story of twentieth century art, but with rap music the situation reaches qualitatively new heights. While rappers often justify themselves with the argument that they are only representing the "real"—they are in fact part of the administered apparatus that produces the real, or if one prefers Baudrillard's term, the "hyper-real," the "more real than real."



Mark Neville

The death of Tupac Shakur is a case in point. Far from his rap representing the "truth" of his life and death. It was his rap that determined the truth of his life. Tupac's murder was the medium whereby reality proved the omnipotence of the image. Following his death, a mural was painted on a wall on New York's Lower East Side that read "Lived By the Gun—Died By The Gun." Unfortunately, the graffiti artist got it backwards. Whatever Tupac's life story before he became a rapper—he lived and died a rapper, not a gangsta. His death was determined by his image. Although, all the details of his death have yet to come out, and its likely that they never will, it is probable that his death occurred to tensions within the "Hip-Hop" community itself. Rap has become so self-referential that even its violence arises out of itself.

Everyday, radio stations like HQT97—"Where Hip-Hop Lives" in New York broadcast endless interviews with whatever rapper they can get in the studio. For the most part, they all end up saying about the same thing—more dogma about the "realness" of their particular rap, the "truthness" of their particular crew, or worse yet, the intricacies regarding their latest record deal. What is it in capitalism that makes consumers so interested in the machinations of their own exploitation, that they listen endlessly to rappers talk of the money they are making off of them?

Several Anarchy back issues are available on-line at:

## Spunk Press

<http://www.spunk.org/>

SPUNK PRESS is an independent anarchist publishing project. Our goal is to collect anarchist, alternative and underground materials in electronic format on computers, and make them available free of charge. The archive is currently located on the Internet (a worldwide network of computers that can be accessed by five million people), but we also want to reach out into the world of bulletin board systems (BBSes), personal computers and to those without access to computers. We want to help editors and writers to convert or produce their works in an electronic format and use the distribution channels of the global networks: text archives on computers, electronic mail address lists, etc. We are seeking contributions of fanzines, pamphlets, books, articles, interviews, reviews, posters, and other material, both in-print and out-of-print, in any language. You can send material either via electronic mail or on computer diskette. If you use a word processor or desktop publishing package, we can publish your material worldwide. It will cost you nothing.

SPUNK PRESS is run by an editorial collective with members in Holland, Italy, Sweden, the U.S.A. and the U.K. We use electronic mail to coordinate and administer the archive. For more information and a copy of our current catalogue, contact Spunk Press by electronic mail at: [spunk-list@lysator.liu.se](mailto:spunk-list@lysator.liu.se) or write to us at one of these addresses:

Spunk Press EAA  
c/o Box A  
Arjuna 12 Mill Road  
Cambridge, CB1 2AD  
UK

Spunk PRESS  
c/o Practical Anarchy  
POB 179  
College Park, MD 20741-1079  
USA

If you want to take a look at the archive, you can get to the archive through:

[gopher:etext.archive.umich.edu:/politics/Spunk](mailto:gopher:etext.archive.umich.edu:/politics/Spunk)  
[AnonFTP:etext.archive.umich.edu:/pub/politics/Spunk](mailto:AnonFTP:etext.archive.umich.edu:/pub/politics/Spunk)

Spunk  
WWW: <http://www.cwi.nl/cwi/people/Jack.Jansen/spunk/>